

811
K22xb

3 5134 00141 0931



Silver Series of Classics

EVE OF ST. AGNE
KEATS

EDITED BY
KATHARINE LEE BATES

Silver Burdett & Ginn



DISCARDED

4
Cult
pres



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

The Silver Series of Classics

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>Webster's "First Oration on Bunker Hill Monument." 25 cents; paper, 15 cents.</p> <p>Macaulay's "Essay on Milton." 25 cents; paper, 15 cents.</p> <p>DeQuincey's "Revolt of the Tartars." 25 cents; paper, 15 cents.</p> <p>Pope's "Iliad of Homer." Books I., VI., XXII, XXIV. 30 cents; paper, 20 cents.</p> <p>Dryden's "Palamon and Arcite." 25 cents; paper, 16 cents.</p> <p>Southey's "Life of Nelson." 40 cents; paper, 30 cents.</p> <p>Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner." 25 cents; paper, 15 cents.</p> <p>Addison's "Sir Roger de Coverley Papers." 25 cents; paper, 15 cents.</p> <p>Macaulay's "Essay on Addison." 30 cents; paper, 20 cents.</p> <p>Milton's "Paradise Lost." Books I. and II. 25 cents; paper, 15 cents.</p> <p>Ballads of American Bravery. 50 cents.</p> <p>Pope's "Essay on Man" and "Essay on Criticism." 30 cents; paper, 20 cents.</p> <p>Burke's "Speech on Conciliation with the American Colonies." 30 cents; paper, 20 cents.</p> <p>Carlyle's "Essay on Burns." 35 cents; paper, 25 cents.</p> <p>Shakespeare's "Macbeth." 40 cents; paper, 25 cents.</p> <p>Tennyson's "The Princess." 35 cents; paper, 25 cents.</p> | <p>Tennyson's "Lancelot and Elaine," and "The Passing of Arthur." 30 cents; paper, 20 cents.</p> <p>Arnold's "Sohrab and Rustum, and Other Poems." 30 cents; paper, 20 cents.</p> <p>Ruskin's "Sesame and Lilies." 35 cents; paper, 25 cents.</p> <p>Goldsmith's "The Traveller" and "The Deserted Village." 30 cents; paper, 20 cents.</p> <p>Pope's "The Rape of the Lock." 25 cents; paper, 15 cents.</p> <p>Cooper's "The Last of the Mohicans." 50 cents.</p> <p>Macaulay's "Lays of Ancient Rome." 35 cents; paper, 25 cents.</p> <p>Scott's "Ivanhoe." 60 cents.</p> <p>Burns: "Selected Poems." 25 cents.</p> <p>Lamb: "Selected Essays." 30 cents.</p> <p>Tennyson's "The Holy Grail." 35 cents.</p> <p>Eliot's "Silas Marner." 35 cents.</p> <p>Shelley's "Adonais and Alastor." 35 cents.</p> <p>Wordsworth: "Selected Poems." 30 cents.</p> <p>Old English Ballads. 40 cents.</p> <p>Lord Chesterfield's Letters to his Son.</p> <p>Keats: "The Eve of St. Agnes," and Other Poems.</p> |
|--|--|

Bindings are cloth unless otherwise specified.

SILVER, BURDETT & COMPANY, Publishers

NEW YORK

BOSTON

CHICAGO



JOHN KEATS.

The Silver Series of Classics

KEATS'S
THE EVE OF ST. AGNES
AND OTHER POEMS

EDITED, WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

KATHARINE LEE BATES

PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH LITERATURE IN WELLESLEY COLLEGE



WITH
Pierce Library
Eastern Oregon Univ
From 1410 L Avenue
La Grande, OR 9785

SILVER, BURDETT AND COMPANY
NEW YORK BOSTON CHICAGO

COPYRIGHT, 1902,

BY SILVER, BURDETT AND COMPANY

PREFATORY NOTE.

THE text of these selected poems is, with a few exceptions in spelling, that of the original editions as given by Forman. Keats's punctuation and capitalization are retained, but in certain instances (as lilly, boddice) his orthography has been discarded in favor of the accepted forms.

My thanks are rendered to poets and to publishers for permission to quote the sonnets by Mr. Aldrich and Miss Thomas, published by Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin and Company; the sonnet by Mr. Gilder, published by The Century Company; and the lyric by Mr. Knowles, published by Messrs. L. C. Page and Company. I am happy to acknowledge further the kindness of Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin and Company in permitting me to quote the sonnets by Longfellow and Lowell.

K. L. B.

CONTENTS.

INTRODUCTION :

PAGE

I. THE LIFE OF KEATS	9
II. THE POETRY OF KEATS	33
III. APPRECIATIONS	48

POEMS :

THE EVE OF ST. AGNES	63
THE EVE OF ST. MARK	77

ODES.

ODE ON A GRECIAN URN	81
ODE TO PSYCHE	83
ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE	85
ODE ON MELANCHOLY	88
ODE ON INDOLENCE	89
TO AUTUMN	91
ODE : BARDS OF PASSION AND OF MIRTH	92
LINES ON THE MERMAID TAVERN	94
FRAGMENT OF AN ODE TO MAIA	95

BALLADS.

MEG MERRILIES	96
LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI	97

SONNETS.

ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER	100
TO HOMER	100
TO ONE WHO HAS BEEN LONG IN CITY PENT	101

	PAGE
THE HUMAN SEASONS	101
TO AILSA ROCK	102
WHEN I HAVE FEARS	102
WHY DID I LAUGH TO-NIGHT?	103
A DREAM, AFTER READING DANTE'S EPISODE OF PAULO AND FRANCESCA	103
ON THE SEA	104
BRIGHT STAR	104
SONG : SHED NO TEAR	105
HYPERION	106
NOTES	133

INTRODUCTION.

I.

THE LIFE OF KEATS.

“Too many doleful stories do we see,
Whose matter in bright gold were best be read.”

Isabella, XII, 5-6.

THE world has heard much of the hardships and sorrows in the brief life of John Keats. Actual hardships they were, and heavy sorrows, yet surely his joys outweighed them all. He knew well the sonnets of Shakespeare—the volume of “Shakespeare’s Poems” made a third of his knapsack library on one of his vacation trips—yet he could avow his belief that Shakespeare was a “perfectly happy creature.” With souls like these, the rapture of creative effort, the ecstasy of life itself, the glory of personality, constitute a deep delight of which men at large, who see and understand the common human losses, pains, and wrongs, faintly conceive. Keats faced his troubles, so long as he retained any measure of physical health, not only bravely, but buoyantly; not merely with a hero’s cheer, but with a poet’s elasticity. When the hand of illness was already upon him, when the pathetic death of his young brother was still fresh in memory, when money difficulties, by no

fault of his, were at their worst, when stupid, malicious attacks in partisan reviews had dragged his name, as he says in this very letter, in "the mire of a bad reputation," he could still write to his one surviving brother, who was trying against odds to carve out a fortune across the Atlantic, "I have not been well treated by the world — and yet I have, capitally well."

Apart from personal misfortunes, the ills of the race cast their gloom over him. "Health and spirits," he wrote, "can only belong unalloyed to the selfish man — the man who thinks much of his fellows can never be in spirits." This is the comment which should explain that famous passage called by various critics unreasonable and unwholesome, — "Were it in my choice, I would reject a Petrarchal coronation — on account of my dying day, and because women have cancers." Keats had studied medicine and walked the London hospitals; he knew whereof he spoke. Yet for all this, and more — for all that dark element in the mystery of being which troubles the profound of thought — the heart of John Keats was, in the main, the heart of a blissful boy. For his brief, bright reign he was a lord of life. "In truth," he wrote, in one of his familiar letters, "the great Elements we know of are no mean comforters. The open sky sits upon our senses like a sapphire crown; the air is our robe of state; the earth is our throne; and the sea a mighty minstrel playing before it."

Less than three years before his death, Keats had written in another of these careless, precious letters: "I compare human life to a large mansion of many apartments, two of which I can only describe, the doors of the rest being as yet

shut upon me. The first we step into we call the Infant, or Thoughtless Chamber, in which we remain as long as we do not think. We remain there a long while, and notwithstanding the doors of the second chamber remain wide open, showing a bright appearance, we care not to hasten to it, but are at length imperceptibly impelled by the awakening of the thinking principle within us. We no sooner get into the second chamber, which I shall call the Chamber of Maiden-thought, than we become intoxicated with the light and the atmosphere. We see nothing but pleasant wonders, and think of delaying there forever in delight. However, among the effects this breathing is father of, is that tremendous one of sharpening one's vision into the heart and nature of man, of convincing one's nerves that the world is full of misery and heart-break, sickness and oppression; whereby this Chamber of Maiden-thought becomes gradually darkened, and at the same time, on all sides of it, many doors are set open — but all dark — all leading to dark passages. We see not the balance of good and evil; we are in a mist, *we* are now in that state, we feel the 'Burden of the Mystery.' . . . Your third Chamber of Life," continues Keats to his friend, "shall be a lucky and a gentle one, stored with the wine of Love and the bread of Friendship."

In his own simile, then, the poet dwelt for the most of his mortal days in the blithe and beautiful chambers of the House of Life; and though his third Chamber was one of anguish, where the "wine of Love" turned to bitterness on dying lips, the "bread of Friendship" sustained him to the last. Not even his unhappy end was all unhappiness. Something of the peace of death was his before he died.

He said he felt the flowers growing over him. Quieted and reconciled, he wearied for his rest. "Blessed, methinks, is the lot of him that sleeps, and tosses not, nor turns, even Endymion."

The outer facts of this short life are quickly given. Keats was born in London on the twenty-ninth or thirty-first day of October, 1795. His father, who seems to have come from the West Country, had been head hostler in a Finsbury livery-stable, kept by one Mr. John Jennings, a man of some substance. The young hostler married his employer's daughter, Frances, and presently, on the retirement of his father-in-law, succeeded to the charge of the stable. Here, at the sign of the Swan-and-Hoop, the poet was born. There were three younger brothers, — George, Thomas, and Edward, of whom the third died in babyhood. Last of all came a little girl, Frances Mary, nearly eight years younger than John. Meantime the family had removed to a house some half a mile distant from the stable.

The boys were put at the Rev. John Clarke's boarding-school, in Enfield, where their mother's brothers had been educated. This picturesque village is only ten miles north of London, and Mr. Keats occasionally rode out to see his sons. On his way home, at night, from one of these visits, April 16, 1804, he was killed by a fall from his horse. Within a year Mrs. Keats had married another stableman; but a separation was soon effected, and she went to live with her widowed mother, at Edmonton, two miles from Enfield. In February, 1810, consumption, destined to play

so tragic a part in the fortunes of the Keats family, did its work upon the mother. Mrs. Jennings, who survived her daughter but a few years, at once made over to two London merchants, Messrs. Sandall and Abbey, a sum of £8000, the bulk of her estate, to be held in trust for her four grandchildren. With an inheritance of nearly ten thousand dollars, it does not seem that a lad of John Keats's parts, a student of such diligence and ability that for the last two or three half-years he had carried off the first prizes of the school, should have been withdrawn, at fifteen, from Enfield, and apprenticed to an Edmonton surgeon; but the trustee who assumed the active guardianship of the orphans, Mr. Abbey, a wholesale tea-dealer, probably prided himself on being "a practical man." At all events, he set small store by education, for, years after, Keats pleaded with him in vain to allow the little Fanny that longer stay at school which she desired. The young apprentice, while attending to his duties in the surgery, followed the course which, later on, he urged upon Fanny. "I had always a presentiment of not being able to succeed in persuading Mr. Abbey to let you remain longer at School—I am very sorry that he will not consent. I recommend you to keep up all that you know and to learn more by yourself however little." The neighborhood of Enfield favored the boy's private studies, and once a week, or oftener, he would walk over to the school for an hour of "good talk" about literature with a kindred spirit, the master's son, Charles Cowden Clarke. This lad, who was to take a place in the front rank of England's Shakespeare scholars, one day lent his

friend Spenser's "Faery Queene," and thenceforth Keats was a poet.

More than a year before the apprenticeship should have closed, something went wrong between Keats and Mr. Hammond, the surgeon. The indentures were cancelled, and Keats, in 1814, went to London to walk the hospitals. By the following summer his brothers, who had successively passed from school to clerkships in Mr. Abbey's counting-house, joined him, and the three lived together in London lodgings until the spring of 1817. Cowden Clarke, too, had come to London, and he and Keats eagerly resumed their readings and literary talks. The sonnet "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer," written in the summer of 1815, was the fruit of one of these evenings, and Keats's first great utterance in poetry. Besides the achievement of an immortal English sonnet, it is a little matter that Keats passed with credit, in this same summer, his examination at Apothecaries' Hall. In the following spring he received an appointment as "dresser," or surgeon's assistant, at Guy's Hospital; and the career which his guardian had planned for him, a career socially far superior to that of his father and grandfather, seemed well begun. But Mr. Abbey had failed to reckon with the fact of genius. Keats handled the lancet with mechanical dexterity, but with an essential indifference that kept him in dread of some disaster. If a ray of sunshine in the lecture room could float his mind away "to Oberon and fairy-land," what might not befall a patient under the steel of a surgeon whose brain was so disposed to poetic abstrac-

tion? When Keats came of age, he had already drifted out of his profession into the literary life.

The Clarkes were Liberals, and from them, to his guardian's disgust, Keats had regularly received and read, while still at Edmonton, Leigh Hunt's *Examiner*. This journal finally went too far for the patience of the government, and its editor served a two years' term of imprisonment on the charge of libelling the Prince Regent. Leigh Hunt was a winsome martyr and seems to have held a continuous reception in jail. Cowden Clarke was one of the many young Liberals who called on him there to express indignant sympathy, and Keats was stirred to a sonnet "Written on the Day that Mr. Leigh Hunt left Prison." Cowden Clarke was proud to show this and other manuscripts of Keats to "wronged Libertas," who, in his gracious way, asked to meet the budding poet. So Keats soon found himself on the friendliest of footings in that genial Hunt household at Hampstead, a favorite, high-lying suburb of London. Here he met Reynolds, an ardent youth whose poetic promise was not realized; Haydon, the painter, long believed by his friends and by himself a transcendent genius; and even Shelley, whose unselfish spirit was eager, from the outset to the end, to serve his younger rival, but whose advances Keats persistently evaded. That the social difference between the son of the baronet and the son of the hostler put the prouder man at a disadvantage is natural enough. Keats, for all his Liberalism, would have liked to be "well-born," just as he would have liked a more commanding presence. "You

.

see what it is," he once wrote to his sister-in-law in whimsical tone, "to be under six foot and not a lord." But the nobler reason for his shrinking from Shelley doubtless lay in the instinct of self-preservation, the necessity for maintaining free from so powerful an influence his own poetic individuality. If Shelley's golden light felt itself dimmed when the redder, coarser glow of Byron was by, much more might Keats need to protect his yet uncertain star.

In 1816 Leigh Hunt printed in *The Examiner* two of Keats's sonnets, the one to "Solitude" (May 5) and the one on "Chapman's Homer" (December 1). In the second instance, Hunt prefaced the sonnet with a few pleasant words. An enthusiastic young publisher, Charles Ollier, was fired to confidence in the new poet, and Keats's first volume, "Poems," with a motto from Spenser and a dedicatory sonnet to Leigh Hunt, was brought out by the Olliers in March, 1817. The volume attracted small attention. Hunt gave it a friendly review, of course, but the sale soon ceased, and the publishers seem to have made over the unsold copies to George Keats, not without an exchange of angry letters.

The young poet, met, however, with lasting kindness from another firm of publishers, Messrs. Taylor and Hessey, who were ready to run the risk of his "Endymion," already well in mind. Acting on the advice of his brothers and other friends, who urged him to go alone into the country for invigoration of health and for solitary thought and study, Keats left London, the month after his book was published, for the Isle of Wight. Here the unrelieved

strain of imagination broke his sleep and fretted him to fever, until he was glad to have his brother Tom with him at Margate, a sea-coast resort popular with Londoners, and, later, at the cathedral city of Canterbury. Early in the summer the three brothers took lodgings in Hampstead, where Keats, introduced by Reynolds, added to his list of friends Dilke the critic, afterward editor of *The Athenæum*, and a Scotchman, Charles Brown, who was a lover of poetry and an experimenter in various fields of literature. Through Reynolds, too, Keats came to know and hold in peculiar honor Benjamin Bailey, at this time an Oxford undergraduate reading for the Church. "That sort of probity and disinterestedness," Keats wrote to his brothers, "which such men as Bailey possess, does hold and grasp the tip-top of any spiritual honors that can be paid to anything in this world." Although Keats had declined an invitation from Shelley this summer, he visited Bailey at Oxford and wrote there the third book of "Endymion."

On his return to Hampstead, in October, he found causes of disquietude. Leigh Hunt, naturally obnoxious to the Tories, had been made the object of a virulent attack in *Blackwood's Magazine*, which, to its own disgrace, had entered on a series of blackguard articles against what it was pleased to term "The Cockney School of Poetry." Hunt's friends and protégés could expect no mercy, and Keats, who knew that his turn was to come, frankly admitted that he did not "relish" the prospect. He was troubled, too, to find Hunt and Haydon "at loggerheads," as well as Reynolds and Haydon. "It is unfortunate;" he wrote to Bailey, "men should bear with each other; there lives not

the man who may not be cut up, aye, lashed to pieces, on his weakest side. The best of men have but a portion of good in them. . . . Before I felt interested in either Reynolds or Haydon, I was well-read in their faults; yet, knowing them both, I have been cementing gradually with both. I have an affection for them both, for reasons almost opposite; and to both must I of necessity cling, supported always by the hope that when a little time, a few years, shall have tried me more fully in their esteem, I may be able to bring them together. The time must come, because they have both hearts; and they will recollect the best parts of each other when this gust is overblown." In Keats's lodgings at Hampstead there was more serious cause for depression. His brother Tom, now nineteen years old, but so frail that he had been obliged to give up his clerkship at the tea-house, showed ominous signs of consumption. Keats himself was feeling far from well and had begun to fear that he might never be "secure in robustness" again, but he let his brothers go to winter in the milder climate of Devonshire without him, while he finished "Endymion" and prepared it for the press. He met Wordsworth that winter, but the pedestalled poet gazed down upon this youth of the eager, glowing eyes and sensitive mouth with the blank frigidity of a laurelled statue. Keats became acquainted with Lamb and Hazlitt, too, famous critics whose enthusiasm for the Elizabethan drama could not outgo his own, but all their poetic acumen failed to discover a genius that was to so small a degree in print.

In March (1818) Keats went to Teignmouth, a watering-place on the south coast of Devon, to relieve his brother

George in the care of Tom. George Keats was a high-spirited fellow, of firmer physique than his brothers. He had thrown up his position in Mr. Abbey's counting-house, because of a pique against the junior partner, but the fund left for the Keats children, already considerably drawn upon for John's surgical training and Tom's illness, could not support three young men, with a well-loved little sister to consider, in idleness. There seemed slight prospect, even to their sanguine hearts, that John's poetry would bring in much immediate money, and George Keats, who attained his majority that spring, determined, with youthful energy, to draw out as much of his capital as could be extricated from the financial tangle of their affairs, emigrate to America, and build up a fortune for them all. Hardly more than a boy, he promptly took to himself a girl-wife, Georgiana Wylie, whom he had begun to woo two years before with a valentine which his poet-brother had written for the purpose. In June the young couple were to sail for the New World, and Keats, whose "Endymion" was in press and whose "Isabella" just completed, felt the zest of travel awaken in himself. He also wanted to go "wonder-ways," and decided, since Tom's health had rallied, to try a walking tour with his Scotch friend, Brown. Writing cheerfully to Reynolds, who was ill, Keats said: "I'll have leather buttons and belt; and if Brown holds his mind, 'over the hills we go.' If my books will help me to it, then will I take all Europe in turn, and see the kingdoms of the earth and the glory of them. Tom is getting better; he hopes you may meet him at the top o' the hill." Leaving the invalid in good care at their Hampstead lodgings, Keats coached it with the bride and

groom to Liverpool and bade them a loving godspeed. Then he started out, with Brown, to explore the Lake Country, sacred to Wordsworth and Coleridge; Ayrshire, sacred to Burns; the "Lady of the Lake" region; and on to Fingal's Cave. Of the poems which he wrote by the way, the most memorable are "To Ailsa Rock," "Staffa," and "Meg Merilies." But the rough tramping in the Highlands, with the limited diet of oatcakes and eggs, and the frequent wettings, overtaxed the poet's slender strength. He had hoped to harden himself by this trip, but, on the contrary, he contracted a sore throat, from which he was never again to be entirely free. A physician whom he consulted at Inverness ordered him home. Arriving at Hampstead in mid-August, wearied out, he was met by word of Tom's serious relapse and by the malicious reviews in *Blackwood's* and *The Quarterly*. The coarse insolence rained on "Johnny Keats" by no means gave this stout-hearted young Englishman his death-stroke, as, after he had died, was commonly believed for a generation, but that he smarted under the brutal blows many a passing touch in his letters indicates. He asked his sister-in-law not to let any boy of hers be christened John, however much George's affection for his brother might urge it. "'Tis a bad name, and goes against a man. If my name had been Edmund, I should have been more fortunate."

The outrage of these reviews, with their gross personalities, their sneers at this cockney poet out of an apothecary's shop, was so flagrant, that not only Reynolds, but a stranger, hotly expostulated through the medium of the newspapers. Keats wrote to his publishers: "I cannot but feel indebted to those gentlemen who have taken my

part. As for the rest, I begin to get a little acquainted with my own strength and weakness. Praise or blame has but a momentary effect on the man whose love of beauty in the abstract makes him a severe critic on his own works." Keats wrote briefly to his far-away brother George of these affairs, but put the subject by with the words, "This is a mere matter of the moment; I think I shall be among the English Poets after my death."

This October letter had a heavier burden to carry. "Poor Tom" was sinking fast, and his poet-brother, to whom he clung "as his only comfort," was absorbed in caring for him till the end, which came early in December.

As a boy of fourteen, Keats had devotedly nursed his mother through her last illness, and now, with hereditary tendency to consumption and with injury to the throat tissues already wrought by the Scotch rains, it was at the peril of his life, as his medical knowledge doubtless warned him, that he tended Tom through those sorrowful autumn months. The sympathetic strain, in itself, was more than Keats was in any condition to bear, although he bore it tenderly and truly to the last. "I wish," he wrote to Dilke in September, "I could say Tom was any better. His identity presses upon me so all day that I am obliged to go out—and although I intended to have given some time to study alone, I am obliged to write and plunge into abstract images to ease myself of his countenance, his voice, and feebleness—so that I live now in a continual fever. It must be poisonous to life, although I feel well." So sensitive, so sad, and so loving was the dying lad that Keats dared not write to George in the sick-room. "I cannot

even now ask him for any message," are the closing words of the October letter; "his heart speaks to you."

Too little account has been taken of the exhausting drain made by this autumn of 1818 upon Keats's nerve and stock of moral strength. Tom's death-bed must have meant to him not merely pathos and bereavement, but memory of his mother's mortal struggle, and prophecy of his own. Keats, who had given help so faithfully to his brother, now stood sorely in need of help himself. Brown did what friendship could. He made Keats leave the lodgings where Tom had died and take up pleasant quarters under his own roof. He accompanied him in January on a trip to Sussex, whither Keats, as he casually mentioned in a letter to George, "took down some thin paper and wrote on it a little poem called *St. Agnes' Eve*." But the poet's emotional nature, stirred to its depths, cried out for something more than friendship, and just at this crisis, when the love of a noble woman might have calmed him back to health, his path must needs be crossed by Fanny Brawne. In December this girl of eighteen, a new resident at Hampstead, impressed him as "beautiful and elegant, graceful, silly, fashionable, and strange," but early in the following year flamed up a wild, jealous passion, poisoned from the first by a prescience of death and loss. It had its delirious joys, but it was a wasting fire at the centre of his life.

None the less, the wonder-roll of Keats's poems for 1819 includes his supreme achievements, — "*The Eve of St. Agnes*," "*Bards of Passion and of Mirth*," "*La Belle Dame sans Merci*," "*Ode on a Grecian Urn*," "*Ode to Psyche*,"

“Ode to a Nightingale,” “The Eve of St. Mark,” “Ode to Autumn,” “Hyperion.”

Meanwhile he was as loyal as ever to ties of blood and friendship. His letters to his sister Fanny show his character in a peculiarly pleasant light. During his Oxford visit, Keats, in writing to her, then a schoolgirl of fourteen, had urged that she make her letters a diary of her life. “This I feel as a necessity,” he said, “for we ought to become intimately acquainted, in order that I may not only, as you grow up, love you as my only Sister, but confide in you as my dearest friend. . . . You will preserve all my Letters and I will secure yours—and thus in the course of time we shall each of us have a good Bundle—which, hereafter, when things may have strangely altered and God knows what happened, we may read over together and look with pleasure on times past—that now are to come.”

The Abbeyes, who kept Fanny under close guardianship, discouraged both visits and letters from her brothers. Keats met their disfavor good-naturedly. He wrote back from his walking-trip with Brown, “Mr. Abbey says we are Don Quixotes—tell him we are more generally taken for pedlers.” When George and Tom were in Devonshire, Keats wrote them of a recent call, despite “glum” looks from Mr. Abbey, on Fanny. “Mrs. Abbey was saying that the Keatses were ever indolent, that they would ever be so, and that it is born in them. Well, whispered Fanny to me, if it is born with us, how can we help it.” Yet Keats keenly regretted, especially as troubles darkened over them, that his young sister should be thus

“prisoned” from him, and tried by cheery letters, where playfulness and earnest counsel mingle, and by little brotherly gifts, to keep her in good courage. But the year after Tom’s death, although Keats was especially tender of her, his visits had to be again and again postponed, usually because of a sore throat that forbade walking, and an empty purse that forbade coach hire. For George, who had settled in Louisville, had failed in his first trading enterprise and wrote urgently for fresh remittances, and Haydon, who had almost extorted a loan of thirty pounds from Keats, showed no disposition to repay it. Keats had generous friends, but he was too honorable a man to live contentedly on a borrowing basis. He thought seriously of resuming surgery, even of undertaking tea brokerage for Mr. Abbey, but decided to try literature a little longer. He spent the summer and autumn of 1819 on the Isle of Wight and in the old cathedral city of Winchester, working with Brown, who had once made £500 from a Russian opera, on a tragedy. Brown would have had Keats return with him to Hampstead, but the poet was already in Brown’s debt and strove to decline further hospitality. “I have not known yet,” he wrote to his friend, “what it is to be diligent. I purpose living in town in a cheap lodging, and endeavoring, for a beginning, to get the theatricals of some paper. When I can afford to compose deliberate poems, I will.” In October, accordingly, he settled at Westminster, but feverish longing for Fanny Brawne broke down his resolution. Within ten days he returned to Brown’s house, which was next door to hers.

The tragedy, "Otho the Great," was not produced, and Keats's effort to rival Byron in a satirical poem resulted in a failure, "Cap and Bells." January of 1820 was marked by a flying visit from George, who had dashed across the Atlantic for further business arrangements with Mr. Abbey, and yet, for all his American hurry, found time to make transcripts of his brother's new poems. George succeeded eventually in building up a moderate fortune and, dying in 1842, left a reputé in his adopted city, says Bayard Taylor, "of the purest and the noblest," but his wealth came too late for Keats's hour of need. This remained a rooted grief with the Louisville merchant, who kept upon his mantel a miniature of his poet brother, with one of Shakespeare "next above him, Tom at the top, Beaumont and Fletcher on either side."

A few days after George had sailed again, Keats became severely chilled on the outside of a stage, and that night coughed blood. "I know the color of that blood," he said calmly; "it is arterial blood — I cannot be deceived in that color — that drop of blood is my death-warrant — I must die."

He kept his bed two months, but rallied with the spring, and went out a little. His third volume, "Lamia, Isabella, The Eve of St. Agnes and other Poems," was issued by his friendly publishers, Messrs. Taylor and Hessey, in July. The *Edinburgh Review* gave it an unprejudiced notice, there was a fair sale, but Keats had suffered a relapse. In his dejection he was touched by an invitation from Shelley, couched in the most delicate and winning terms, to spend the winter in his home at Pisa; but Keats was now too ill for such stimulating companionship.

Mrs. Brawne had regretted her daughter's betrothal to the young poet, but she did not fail in kindness to him,—a kindness which, after his death, was continued toward his sister. In August she took him into her own house, and Keats had the bitter-sweet comfort of his beloved's daily presence and ministrations. His passion stung him to rebellion against what seemed to him the ignominy of his fate. "There is a great difference," he wrote ruefully, "between going off in warm blood like Romeo, and making one's exit like a frog in a frost." Parting was an agony, yet Italy was clearly the last hope, and Keats sailed in September, with an artist friend, Joseph Severn, for Naples. On board ship Keats wrote his last poem, the noble sonnet beginning

"Bright star, would I were steadfast as thou art."

At Naples he received another letter from Shelley, full of generous delight in "Hyperion," and renewing the invitation to visit him in Pisa. But the sick man clung to the more familiar comradeship of Severn, who was bound for Rome.

Keats was able to drive and walk more or less through the autumn, but his soul was torn by yearning and darkened by despair. He could not trust himself to write to Fanny Brawne, nor to open the three letters he received from her, but he asked to have them buried on his heart. He could not even bear the thought of his sister, whose letter, also, he wished to have buried with him. "It runs in my head that we shall all die young," he wrote to Brown in his last letter,—dated November 30,—adding a request

that word of his condition be sent to George and to Fanny, "who walks about my imagination like a ghost — she is so like Tom."

In December came the final breakdown, with hemorrhages, fever, and raving, but by degrees the anguish ebbed, and Keats awaited the end in brave tranquillity.

In his earliest volume of poems he had pictured the majesty of a poet's passing.

"What does he murmur with his latest breath,
While his proud eye looks through the film of death?"

But this poet lay hushed and humble, listening gratefully to Severn as he played him Haydn's sonatas and read him Jeremy Taylor's earnest-thoughted sentences flushed with the Elizabethan color that Keats loved.

He died February 23, 1821, giving strength and courage, even in his mortal agony, to his devoted friend: —

"Severn—I—lift me up—I am dying—I shall die easy; don't be frightened—be firm, and thank God it has come."

Keats was buried in the Protestant cemetery at Rome, where the ashes of Shelley were soon to rest beside him, and, after many years, the aged body of Severn. On his monument was engraved, as from his death-bed he had bidden,

"Here lies one whose name was writ in water."

And yet our poet Stoddard, the professed disciple of Keats, as was Bayard Taylor of Shelley, says in his sonnet "To the Immortal Memory of Keats":—

"Thy life was happy."

For the poets understand what Keats meant when he wrote to George, in that painful autumn of 1818: "I am as happy as a man can be—that is, in myself; I should be happier if Tom were well, and if I knew you were passing pleasant days. Then I should be most enviable—with the yearning passion I have for the Beautiful, connected and made one with the ambition of my intellect."

Keats's own health was already shaken. Already he had begun to learn

"How sickening, how dark the dreadful leisure
Of weary days, made deeper exquisite
By a fore-knowledge of unslumbrous night."

But his spring of poetic joy still sparkled in the midst of all distresses. Now and then he pulled a wry face over insolent reviews or other rubs of fortune. "In this world there is no quiet,—nothing but teasing and snubbing and vexation." But at a touch the broken music was restored. "Nothing startles me beyond the moment. The setting sun will always set me to rights, or if a sparrow come before my window I take part in its existence, and pick about the gravel."

Keats's childhood had been rich in home affections. This family of the Swan-and-Hoop livery-stable loved one another with a love surpassing the wont of palaces. The brothers, grown to manhood, kept a tender memory of their boyish days in their grandmother's house at Edmonton, when all three were eager rivals for Fanny's baby favors. The brotherly bond strengthened with their growth. George and Tom shared John's taste for the Elizabethans,

and had a perfect faith in his own genius. Keats's poetic epistle and sonnet to George breathe the frankest confidence, and there rests a tranquil light of affection upon the Milton-echoing sonnet, "To my Brothers," written on Tom's eighteenth birthday:—

"Small, busy flames play through the fresh-laid coals,
 And their faint cracklings o'er our silence creep
 Like whispers of the household gods that keep
 A gentle empire o'er fraternal souls.
 And while, for rhymes, I search around the poles,
 Your eyes are fix'd, as in poetic sleep,
 Upon the lore so voluble and deep,
 That aye at fall of night our care condoles.
 This is your birthday, Tom, and I rejoice
 That thus it passes smoothly, quietly:
 Many such eves of gently whisp'ring noise
 May we together pass, and calmly try
 What are this world's true joys, — ere the great Voice
 From its fair face, shall bid our spirits fly."

Before a second November had come, that gracious companionship was broken, and Keats was writing to Bailey in the bitterness of a grief whose source, nevertheless, was such sweetness of fraternal sympathy as few men know: "I was in hopes some little time back to be able to relieve your dulness by my spirits—to point out things in the world worth your enjoyment—and now I am never alone without rejoicing that there is such a thing as death—without placing my ultimate in the glory of dying for a great human purpose. Perhaps if my affairs were in a different state, I should not have written the above—you shall judge: I have two brothers; one is driven, by the 'burden of society,' to America; the other, with an exquisite love

of life, is in a lingering state. My love for my brothers, from the early loss of our parents, and even from earlier misfortunes, has grown into an affection 'passing the love of women.' I have been ill-tempered with them. I have vexed them, — but the thought of them has always stifled the impression that any woman might otherwise have made upon me. I have a sister too; and may not follow them either to America or to the grave. Life must be undergone; and I certainly derive some consolation from the thought of writing one or two more poems before it ceases."

Such consolation was his, and in no grudging measure, for though, after Tom's death, Keats wrote to George, "The going on of the world makes me dizzy," yet even his own world of imagination went on, and in the following few months his supreme poems came into being, renewing his joy.

The school life at Enfield, upon which Keats entered while still in childish frock, was short, indeed, but it meant what education so seldom means, — the awakening of a life-long passion for the best in literature. Keats, as a school-boy, was a fiery, gallant-hearted little fellow, quick with his fists, rushing up to attack the tall usher who had boxed Tom's ears, but an absorbed student, orderly in the performance of tasks, reading on his own lines at meal hours, play hours, all hours, making a written translation of the "Æneid" for his good pleasure, and, says Cowden Clarke, going through the "Faery Queene" "as a young horse would through a spring meadow — ramping!" What Olympian hours were those that these two English lads passed in their rustic arbor beside the pond, with the nightingales

singing from the moonlight meadow, deep in talk of Spenser's fairyland! If Shelley, later on, could have carried out his generous purpose and taught Keats Greek and Spanish at Pisa, what a university such a master and such a pupil would have made! But Keats had a master, nevertheless, — the Shakespeare whom he read with an ardor and a comprehension that no professors teach.

To his riches of friendship and literature, he early added a Greek delight in Nature. It was all alive to him, and he loved it all from the

“daffodils

With the green world they live in,”

to “old ocean” rolling

“a lengthened wave to the shore,

Down whose green back the shortliv'd foam, all hoar,

Bursts gradual, with a wayward indolence.”

Even when he closed his eyes on the braveries of earth and sea and sky, he “dwelt with Beauty.” His young imagination colored his very sleep with visions. And when these multiplied and pressed upon him until he fell to caging them in verse and stanza, his were those raptures that only artists know.

“Therefore, 'tis with full happiness that I

Will trace the story of Endymion.

The very music of the name has gone

Into my being, and each pleasant scene

Is growing fresh before me as the green

Of our own vallies.

* * * * *

Many and many a verse I hope to write,

Before the daisies, vermeil rimm'd and white,

Hide in deep herbage; and ere yet the bees

Hum about globes of clover and sweet peas,

I must be near the middle of my story.
 O may no wintry season, bare, and hoary,
 See it half-finish'd ; but let Autumn bold,
 With universal tinge of sober gold,
 Be all about me when I make an end.
 And now at once, adventuresome, I send
 My herald thought into a wilderness :
 There let its trumpet blow, and quickly dress
 My uncertain path with green, that I may speed
 Easily onward, thorough flowers and weed."

The spite of Tory reviewers did not daunt this joy. "In case of failure with the world," Keats wrote of "Lamia," "I shall find my content." An acquaintance remembered his face "as one of singular beauty and brightness; it had an expression as if he had been looking on some glorious sight."

Even in those last cruel months, when Keats was but "a fever of himself," his courage held

"faint-smiling like a star
 Through autumn mists."

He had words of cheer for his friends: "Do not, my dear Brown, tease yourself about me. You must fill up your time as well as you can, and as happily. You must think of my faults as lightly as you can." The letters from his sick-bed to Fanny Brawne were not all of desperate tenor. Witness this:—

"My dearest Fanny,

For this Week past I have been employed in marking the most beautiful passages in Spenser, intending it for you, and comforting myself in being somehow occupied to give you however small a pleasure. It has lightened my time very much. I am much better. God bless you."

What man is fortunate enough to pity him who had for his heritage the loving faith of brothers and of friends, deep communion with Nature and with poetry, radiant visions, the ecstasy of artistic creation, and an immortal fame? Keats had fulfilled his duties to the point of generosity; he had kept his honor clear; he had held firmly to his poetic mission; and he had "lov'd the principle of beauty in all things." Well might his

"young spirit follow
The morning sunbeams to the great Apollo
Like a fresh sacrifice."

II.

THE POETRY OF KEATS.

"Sense was fill'd
With that new blissful golden melody."
— *Hyperion*, II, 280-1.

THE blunders of the early reviewers in estimating Keats's poetry go to show how original that poetry was, how apart from the accepted canons of taste, a new wine that burst the old bottles. Keats had fed his young genius at the pure Elizabethan fountains. Spenser and Shakespeare and Milton were his guiding stars. In his earliest volume, he vindicated their glories with boyish vehemence at the expense of the formal eighteenth-century school:—

"Could all this be forgotten? Yes, a schism
Nurtured by foppery and barbarism,
Made great Apollo blush for this his land.
Men were thought wise who could not understand

His glories : with a puling infant's force
 They sway'd about upon a rocking-horse,
 And thought it Pegasus. Ah, dismal-soul'd !
 The winds of heaven blew, the ocean roll'd
 Its gathering waves — ye felt it not. The blue
 Bared its eternal bosom, and the dew
 Of summer nights collected still to make
 The morning precious : beauty was awake !
 Why were ye not awake ? But ye were dead
 To things ye knew not of, — were closely wed
 To musty laws lined out with wretched rule
 And compass vile : so that ye taught a school
 Of dolts to smooth, inlay, and clip, and fit,
 Till, like the certain wands of Jacob's wit,
 Their verses tallied. Easy was the task :
 A thousand handicraftsmen wore the mask
 Of Poesy. Ill-fated, impious race !
 That blasphem'd the bright Lyrist to his face,
 And did not know it."

This passage so angered Byron that he never admitted the power of Keats's work, writing of him in correspondence with a fierce contempt, until at last, under Shelley's influence, he gave "Hyperion" its due, as seeming "actually inspired by the Titans" and "as sublime as Æschylus." Accepting the prevailing opinion that Keats had died of chagrin from the reviews of "Endymion," Byron twice alluded to him in verse, but with a supercilious note : —

" Who kill'd John Keats ?
 'I,' says the Quarterly,
 So savage and Tartarly,
 'Twas one of my feats."

" Who shot the arrow ?
 'The poet-priest Milman
 (So ready to kill man),
 Or Southey, or Barrow.' "

And again, in "Don Juan":—

"John Keats, who was kill'd off by one critique,
Just as he really promised something great,
If not intelligible, without Greek
Contrived to talk about the Gods of late,
Much as they might have been supposed to speak.
Poor fellow! His was an untoward fate:
'Tis strange the mind, that very fiery particle,
Should let itself be snuff'd out by an article."

But the authority of Byron has waned, while the authority of Keats has waxed. Nineteenth-century England, in precept and in practice, came to accept Keats's conception of poetic values. The reaction toward Pope and his principles of verse has been academic and limited.

As time has passed, Keats has been recognized more and more as the source of a new poetic current. Tennyson, whose own influence over contemporary poets has been so great, owes an immeasurable debt to Keats. William Morris called Keats one of his masters. For these later men, were the rewards; for Keats, the service. Browning has set forth the truth of it all in his poem "Popularity":—

* * * * *

"Meantime, I'll draw you as you stand,
With few or none to watch and wonder:
I'll say—a fisher, on the sand
By Tyre the old, with ocean-plunder,
A netful, brought to land.

"Who has not heard how Tyrian shells
Enclosed the blue, that dye of dyes

Whereof one drop worked miracles,
 And colored like Astarte's eyes
 Raw silk the merchant sells ?

* * * * *

“ And there's the extract, flasked and fine,
 And priced and saleable at last !
 And Hobbs, Nobbs, Stokes and Nokes combine
 To paint the future from the past,
 Put blue into their line.

“ Hobbs hints blue, — straight he turtle eats :
 Nobbs prints blue, — claret crowns his cup :
 Nokes outdares Stokes in azure feats, —
 Both gorge. Who fished the murex up ?
 What porridge had John Keats ? ”

It is amusing to see how flatly the later critics of Keats contradict the earlier. So keen a pen as De Quincey's sternly assailed the young poet for disregard of diction, for abuse of his mother-tongue, but Matthew Arnold, having duly satisfied himself that Keats was entitled to moral respect, goes on to say of his poetry : “ Shakespearian work it is ; not imitative, indeed, of Shakespeare, but Shakespearian, because its expression has that rounded perfection and felicity of loveliness of which Shakespeare is the great master.”

Occasionally a critic of to-day, however, is heard declaring that the first two volumes of Keats deserved no better welcome than they received, that the bulk of his verse is sorry stuff, and that he lives only by virtue of an exceedingly few odes, sonnets, songs, “ The Eve of St. Agnes ” and “ Hyperion.” Yet the lovers of Keats, while fully granting the supremacy of his third volume, delight to pore over his earlier work. It is not only the accomplished

poem that they prize, but the springtide spirit that informs budding leaf no less than splendid flower.

That first thin volume in its drab boards was made up of poetic experiments, epistles in verse to congenial friends, a handful of sonnets, the longer poems "I Stood Tiptoe upon a Little Hill," "Sleep and Poetry," and the fragment "Calidore." The book is bathed in Spenser, moonlight, revery. Greek mythology mingles with mediæval chivalry. There are echoes of Tom Moore and even of less worthy bards. There are scraps of quotation, — "Lydian airs," "mind's eye," "a sunshine in a shady place." There is patriotism, and enthusiasm for liberty. Thoughts of Chatterton, Milton, Burns, and "that warm-hearted Shakespeare" blend with thoughts of Alfred, Kosciusko, Brutus, Tell, Wallace. The volume gives many a glimpse of the young poet. He is footing it back to London at night from a visit, rich in poetic talk, to Hunt, —

"brimful of the friendliness

That in a little cottage I have found ;
Of fair-hair'd Milton's eloquent distress,
And all his love for gentle Lycid drown'd ;
Of lovely Laura in her light green dress,
And faithful Petrarch gloriously crown'd."

He is rambling at dawn in the "happy fields," deeming the fresh-blown musk-rose as graceful as Queen Titania's wand. He is roaming bareheaded through the cool of evening, watching the moon

"when in the waviness

Of whitest clouds she does her beauty dress,
And staidly paces higher up, and higher,
Like a sweet nun in holiday attire."

He is stretched on the grass at his "best lov'd employment" of "scribbling lines."

"E'en now I'm pillow'd on a bed of flowers
That crowns a lofty cliff, which proudly towers
Above the ocean waves. The stalks and blades
Checquer my tablet with their quivering shades."

He has his share of youthful longings, — for travel,

"To sit upon an Alp as on a throne,"

and for heroic adventure. He is yet heart-whole, though he has perused many

"a crumpled-leavèd tale of love,"

tales of Dido, of Leander, of Endymion, and before his fancy float

"ladies fair, that in the distance seem
Fit for the silv'ring of a seraph's dream."

But his supreme desire sets toward poetry.

"O for ten years, that I may overwhelm
Myself in poesy ; so I may do the deed
That my own soul has to itself decreed.

* * * * *

If I do hide myself, it sure shall be
In the very fane, the light of Poesy."

This initial volume abounds in ill-balanced passages, extravagant expressions, sometimes in lapses that touch the ludicrous, as the conception of woman : —

"God ! she is like a milk-white lamb that bleats
For man's protection."

But behind all the turbulence of the first poetic flow is the force of a mountain spring. The images of beauty come with a veritable gush and pour. And already we have the

great Chapman sonnet, which "completely announced," as Leigh Hunt said, "the new poet taking possession." There is, too, the fine sonnet beginning

"To one who has been long in city pent,"

and everywhere is the sprinkling of rich phrases, everywhere the sunrise-colored atmosphere of youthful rapture in the freshness of experience, in the loveliness of earth, in the unutterable thrill of life itself.

"Give me a golden pen, and let me lean
On heap'd-up flowers, in regions clear and far :
Bring me a tablet whiter than a star,
Or hand of hymning angel, when 'tis seen
The silver strings of heavenly harp atween.
* * * * * *
Let me write down a line of glorious tone,
And full of many wonders of the spheres."

The sympathetic reader may find in that first volume what Keats's friends found in it,—the poet behind the poetry. Reynolds's sonnet testifies to the effect which, even at the outset, the "luxuriant Spirit" of Keats made upon his intimates.

"Thy thoughts, dear Keats, are like fresh-gathered leaves,
Or white flowers pluck'd from some sweet lily bed ;
They set the heart a-breathing, and they shed
The glow of meadows, mornings, and spring eves,
Over the excited soul. Thy genius weaves
Songs that shall make the age be nature-led,
And win that coronal for thy young head
Which Time's strange hand of freshness ne'er bereaves.
Go on ! and keep thee to thine own green way,
Singing in that same key which Chaucer sung :—

Be thou companion of the Summer day,
Roaming the fields, and olden woods among:—
So shall thy Muse be ever in her May,
And thy luxuriant Spirit ever young."

Keats was well aware of the imperfections of his prentice work. He put himself to the task of writing a long poem as a test and discipline of his powers. Moonlight seems always to have had for him a peculiar attraction and, of all the classic myths, the fable of Endymion, dear to the Elizabethans, to Lyly and to Fletcher, charmed him most. In the summer of 1816, the date of "I Stood Tiptoe upon a Little Hill," his mind was already teeming with it. In this poem he pays enthusiastic tribute to

"the moon lifting her silver rim
Above a cloud, and with a gradual swim
Coming into the blue with all her light.
O Maker of sweet poets, dear delight
Of this fair world, and all its gentle livers;
Spangler of clouds, halo of crystal rivers,
Mingler with leaves, and dew, and tumbling streams,
Closer of lovely eyes to lovely dreams,
Lover of loneliness, and wandering,
Of upcast eye, and tender pondering!
Thee must I praise above all other glories
That smile us on to tell delightful stories."

The actual writing of "Endymion" was begun in April of 1817, on the Isle of Wight, and was regularly continued, day by day, throughout the spring and summer, although Keats was often despondent over it and already shadowed by a presentiment that untimely death was to cut his labors short.

“My spirit is too weak — mortality
 Weighs heavily on me like unwilling sleep,
 And each imagin'd pinnacle and steep
 Of godlike hardship tells me I must die
 Like a sick Eagle looking at the sky.”

The poem did not flow readily at first. The “continual burning of thought” wore upon Keats’s strength. He tried a sojourn at Canterbury in the hope, whimsically phrased, that the remembrance of Chaucer would set him forward “like a Billiard Ball.” But by the late summer he was writing with rapidity and ease, usually accomplishing fifty lines a day, and, as he had wished, the poem was finished before winter, — the sober gold of autumn was all about him when he made an end.

“Endymion,” a romantic treatment of a Greek legend, consists of about four thousand lines in the iambic pentameter, couplets, divided into four books. The first tells how the Latmian shepherds held a festival to Pan, and how, after the offerings, the hymn, the sports, and the sweet talk among the elder shepherds of what their pagan heaven might be,

“vying to rehearse
 Each one his own anticipated bliss,”

their wan young chief, Endymion, slipped away with his tender sister Peona. In the green solitude she soothed him by

“a lay
 More subtle cadenced, more forest wild
 Than Dryope’s lone lulling of her child,”

and led him to confide to her that the cause of his strange paling and pining was hid in moonlight visions and a mys-

terious passion. A spirit had descended to him from the moon, had uplifted him to the mountain peak, had loved him, and had left him. Thrice had he

“this fair enchantment seen,”

and vain longing was torturing out his life. The second book recounts his “fairy journey” through the deep hollows of the world, “a dusky empire” lighted by

“One faint eternal eventide of gems.”

Here he beheld the “buried magic” of the earth, — the pillared shrine of Diana, the myrtle-walled chamber where hushed Cupids guard the sleep of Adonis, and

“Forth from a rugged arch, in the dusk below,”

the “sombre chariot” of Cybele. At last his “diamond path” ended “abrupt in middle air,” and Jove’s eagle bore Endymion down through depths of gloom to

“a jasmine bower, all bestrown
With golden moss,”

where he found his Love and lost her yet again. It must be admitted that the geography of this book, which leaves the hero under “the giant sea,” is bewildering. The third book describes Endymion’s wandering among the wrecks and ocean secrets of centuries. Here he came on hoary Glaucus, cloaked in blue and seated “upon a weeded rock.” “The gray-haired creature” joyfully recognized in Endymion the stranger predestined by fate to break his own enchantment, to give him back the youth of which Circe, the sorceress, had robbed him, and to restore life to his Scylla, drowned by Circe’s wrath. They went together

to the crystal hall where Glaucus had piously enshrined
“in silent rows” all shipwrecked lovers, —

“Such thousands of shut eyes in order placed ;
Such ranges of white feet, and patient lips
All ruddy, — for here death no blossom nips.”

By decree of the destinies, Endymion had power to restore these sleepers to life and love. The rejoicing multitude of the revived pressed on to Neptune's palace, where Endymion fainted and was borne away by Nereids to a forest nook.

The fourth book opens with a love episode between Endymion and what appeared to be a mortal maid. At this momentary faithlessness to the goddess, “foot-feathered Mercury” flashed down and touched the earth with his wand. Two winged steeds sprang from the turf and bore far away through the air Endymion and the lady, even to the presence of the Olympians. Among these he beheld his crescented moon-spirit and his heart leapt toward her, but he also felt the attraction of the mortal by his side. The steeds soared on toward the Galaxy. The moon rose in the heavens, and as the first beam fell upon Endymion's companion, she melted into air, and the Latmian prince was left alone on

“the green head of a misty hill.”

Here he discovered his earthly Love, so recently dissolved in moonshine, resting quiet on a “bed of dew,” and vowed allegiance unto her alone.

“Pan will bid

Us live in peace, in love and peace among
His forest wildernesses. I have clung

To nothing, loved a nothing, nothing seen
Or felt but a great dream !”

But even as Endymion was planning their sylvan home,
within step of where they may see

“through the trees, a little river go,
All in its mid-day gold and glimmering,”

the lady sobbed that their union was forbidden. Then appeared Peona, urging Endymion to return to his shepherd kingdom and make this stranger queen, but he committed her to his sister's care and declared himself devoted thenceforth to the life of the hermitage. The maidens left him, and Endymion, who knew that he must die, mused all day

“On things for which no wording can be found.”

At nightfall, when the maidens came again for their last farewell, the goddess was revealed in the mortal. Endymion, “spiritualized,” vanished away with Cynthia, and

“Peona went
Home through the gloomy wood in wonderment.”

In point of invention, it is evident that the poem was not a success. A Greek theme should carry with it the Greek distinctness of outline and symmetry of form, but even so kindly a critic as Shelley found it hard to follow the thread of the story, and hostile reviewers hooted it down as unintelligible nonsense. Yet the romantic color that flushes this confused, ill-managed tale has won it many lovers. It abounds in passages of richest beauty. Shelley, while deploring its faults of structure, declared it “full of some of the highest and finest gleams of poetry.”

His final judgment of "Endymion" is the judgment of posterity, — that it contains "treasures of poetry," but "treasures poured forth with indistinct profusion."

Keats became dissatisfied with his work long before it was finished and pushed it on impatiently that his imagination might be rid of it and free for a more fortunate attempt. In the opening of the fourth book, he wrote with a humility that should have disarmed even *Blackwood's* :—

"Great Muse, thou know'st what prison
Of flesh and bone, curbs, and confines, and frets
Our spirits' wings : despondency besets
Our pillows : and the fresh to-morrow morn
Seems to give forth its light in very scorn
Of our dull, uninspired, snail-paced lives.
Long have I said, how happy he who shrives
To thee ! But then I thought on poets gone,
And could not pray — nor can I now — so on
I move to the end in lowliness of heart."

In the first, abandoned preface to "Endymion" Keats had said: "I fought under disadvantages. Before I began I had no inward feel of being able to finish; and as I proceeded my steps were all uncertain. So this poem must rather be considered as an endeavour than a thing accomplished; a poor prologue to what, if I live, I humbly hope to do." In his second preface he repeated that the poem, in comparison with what he had aimed to make it, was a failure, that it bore the marks of "great inexperience, immaturity, and every error denoting a feverish attempt, rather than a deed accomplished," but that its excuse lay in the future, in the poetry for which this had been a training and preparation.

But more and more Keats was haunted by the fear that no adequate future was to be granted him. He worked in such hectic haste because the flying hours were numbered. Like a kindred figure in Spanish literature, the young romanticist Becquer, he was tormented by the visions beating about his brain and demanding outlet. Becquer, who died at thirty-four, attributed his own ill-health to such restlessness of ever-multiplying fancies. "These seditions on the part of the rebel sons of my imagination," wrote the Spanish poet, "explain in some degree my attacks of fever; they are the cause, unrecognized by science, of my excitements and depressions. And thus, although in ill estate, have I lived till now, walking among the indifferent throngs of men with this silent tempest in my head."

Few beyond Keats himself and his loyal little circle of personal friends cared for his future. Only Shelley was watching, with those seraph eyes of his, from Italy. Just before the publication of the third volume, Shelley wrote in correspondence: "Keats, I hope, is going to show himself a great poet; like the sun, to burst through the clouds, which, though dyed in the finest colours of the air, obscured his rising."

This last slender volume amply justified Keats and those who had faith in Keats. It was

"the leap
Of buds into ripe flowers."

"Lamia" and "Isabella," great as is their gain upon "Endymion" in firmness of drawing and in dramatic vigor, show traces still of what Keats called the "mawkishness" of youthful imagination, but "The Eve of St. Agnes" is

matchless of its sort, save by the exquisite fragment "The Eve of St. Mark." In this volume, among lesser splendors, gleam the immortal odes, purpled with a voluptuous melancholy, or golden with a summer day's delight. But a white radiance surrounds the "Ode to a Grecian Urn," marking the way to that calm, ethereal summit on which Keats, in "Hyperion," created a new Olympus. Now, at last, the poet spoke

"With thunder, and with music, and with pomp."

This volume gave a foretaste of that union of ardor with repose which was the great potential endowment of Keats's genius. If he could have realized his full song, human life would have been tranquillized and exalted by a new apocalypse of beauty. But as he stood on the brink of unimaginable achievement,

"A boy yet, young as immortality,"

the ravaging disease made prey of him. Still he strove, like a spent racer in the Olympian games. His aspiration was colossal. He had set his standard no lower than Shakespeare. "I have no right to complain," he wrote, when "Endymion" was flouted. "I have no doubt that if I had written 'Othello' I should have been cheered. I shall go on with patience." Again he said, "I have not the slightest feel of humility towards the public, or to anything in existence but the Eternal Being, the Principle of Beauty, and the Memory of Great Men." The grandeur of his calling possessed him more and more. "I am one that 'gathers Samphire, dreadful trade' — the Cliff of Poesy towers above me." He pleaded for "another opportunity of years." He

urged that as yet he knew nothing, had studied nothing, had thought nothing. He had been enraptured with sensations. It was too early for a philosophy. Even time and space came to him in concrete images : —

“ Now on the moth-time of that evening dim.”

“ About a young bird’s flutter from a wood.”

But length of days was inexorably denied him. What riches of epic, lyric, drama, a mature Keats would have added to the world’s literature we cannot even surmise. His brief life was long enough to impart a fresh impulse to English poetry. The youth who said : “ I muse with the greatest affection on every flower I have known from my infancy. Their shapes and colors are as new to me as if I had just created them with a superhuman fancy,” did indeed touch the world with a magician’s wand. He left

“ Beautiful things made new, for the surprise
Of the sky-children,”

and the thrill of that surprise is still a moving force upon mankind.

III.

APPRECIATIONS.

“ Rain’d violets upon his sleeping eyes.”

— *Endymion*, II, 427.

I weep for Adonais — he is dead !

Oh weep for Adonais, though our tears

Thaw not the frost which binds so dear a head !

And thou, sad Hour selected from all years

To mourn our loss, rouse thy obscure compeers,

And teach them thine own sorrow ! Say : " With me
 Died Adonais ! Till the future dares
 Forget the past, his fate and fame shall be
 An echo and a light unto eternity."

* * * * *

Oh weep for Adonais ! — The quick Dreams,
 The passion-wingèd ministers of thought,
 Who were his flocks, whom near the living streams
 Of his young spirit he fed, and whom he taught
 The love which was its music, wander not —
 Wander no more from kindling brain to brain,
 But droop there whence they sprung ; and mourn their lot
 Round the cold heart where, after their sweet pain,
 They ne'er will gather strength or find a home again.

* * * * *

He has outsoared the shadow of our night.
 Envy and calumny and hate and pain,
 And that unrest which men miscall delight,
 Can touch him not and torture not again.
 From the contagion of the world's slow stain
 He is secure ; and now can never mourn
 A heart grown cold, a head grown gray, in vain —
 Nor, when the spirit's self has ceased to burn,
 With sparkless ashes load an unlamented urn.

* * * * *

Go thou to Rome, — at once the paradise,
 The grave, the city, and the wilderness ;
 And where its wrecks like shattered mountains rise
 And flowering weeds and fragrant copses dress
 The bones of Desolation's nakedness,

Pass, till the Spirit of the spot shall lead

Thy footsteps to a slope of green access,
Where, like an infant's smile, over the dead
A light of laughing flowers along the grass is spread.

And grey walls moulder round, on which dull Time

Feeds, like slow fire upon a hoary brand;
And one keen pyramid with wedge sublime,

Pavilions the dust of him who planned
This refuge for his memory, doth stand

Like flame transformed to marble; and beneath

A field is spread, on which a newer band
Have pitched in heaven's smile their camp of death,
Welcoming him we love with scarce-extinguished breath.

Here pause. These graves are all too young as yet

To have outgrown the sorrow which consigned
Its charge to each; and, if the seal is set

Here on one fountain of a mourning mind,
Break it not thou! too surely shalt thou find
Thine own well full, if thou returnest home,

Of tears and gall. From the world's bitter wind
Seek shelter in the-shadow of the tomb.

What Adonais is why fear we to become?

The One remains, the many change and pass;

Heaven's light for ever shines, earth's shadows fly;
Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,

Stains the white radiance of eternity,
Until Death tramples it to fragments. — Die,
If thou wouldst be with that which thou dost seek!

Follow where all is fled! — Rome's azure sky,

Flowers, ruins, statues, music, words, are weak
The glory they transfuse with fitting truth to speak.

— PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY: from *Adonais*.

The wreath that star-crowned Shelley gave
Is lying on thy Roman grave,
Yet on its turf young April sets
Her store of slender violets ;
Though all the Gods their garlands shower,
I too may bring one purple flower.

— OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES, from *After a Lecture on Keats*.

Since the time of Chaucer, there have been only two poets who at all resemble him ; and these two are widely dissimilar one from the other — Burns and Keats. The accuracy and truth with which Chaucer has described the manners of common life, with the foreground and background, are also to be found in Burns, who delights in broader strokes of external nature, but equally appropriate. He has parts of genius which Chaucer has not in the same degree — the animated and pathetic. Keats, in his *Endymion*, is richer in imagery than either ; and there are passages in which no poet has arrived at the same excellence on the same ground. Time alone was wanting to complete a poet who already far surpassed his contemporaries in this country in the poet's most noble attributes. If anything could engage me to visit Rome, to endure the sight of her scarred and awful ruins, telling their stories on the ground, in the midst of bell-ringers and pantomimes ; if I could let charnel-

houses and opera-houses, consuls and popes, tribunes and cardinals, senatorial orators and preaching friars, clash in my mind, it would be that I might afterwards spend an hour in solitude, where the pyramid of Cestius stands against the wall, and points to the humbler tombs of Keats and Shelley.

—WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR, from *Imaginary Conversations*:

Herewith I send you three pressed withered flowers.
This one was white, with golden star; this, blue
As Capri's cave; that, purple and shot through
With sunset-orange. Where the Duomo towers
In diamond air, and under hanging bowers
The Arno glides, this faded violet grew
On Landor's grave; from Landor's heart it drew
Its magic azure in the long spring hours.
Within the shadow of the Pyramid
Of Caius Cestius was the daisy found,
White as the soul of Keats in Paradise.
The pansy — there were hundreds of them, hid
In the thick grass that folded Shelley's mound,
Guarding his ashes with most lovely eyes.

—THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH, *Three Flowers. To Bayard Taylor*.

"The Muses' son of promise," art thou gone!
Oh, if the world of Grecian dreamers be
In truth embosom'd in eternity,
There will thy spirit find a fitting throne!
Thine was the beauty of the bud half-blown —

The first pure trembling hues of poesy : —
 Sweet, tender, graceful, delicate, wild and free.
 At morn thou bloom'dst — the wind nipp'd — thou art gone!
 Yet, Bard of Youth, thou hast not lived in vain.
 The young, the pure in soul, from age to age,
 Shall revel in the beauty of thy page:
 And love his memory who pour'd the strain.

— JOHN HUNTER: from *Keats*.

Nay, Bird; my grief gainsays the Lord's best right.
 The Lord was fain, at some late festal time,
 That Keats should set all heaven's woods in rhyme,
 And thou in bird-notes. Lo, this tearful night
 Methinks I see thee, fresh from death's despite,
 Perched in a palm-grove, wild with pantomime,
 O'er blissful companies couched in shady thyme,
 — Methinks I hear thy silver whistlings bright
 Meet with the mighty discourse of the wise,
 Till broad Beethoven, deaf no more, and Keats,
 'Midst of much talk, uplift their smiling eyes,
 And mark the music of thy wood-conceits,
 And half-way pause on some large, courteous word,
 And call thee "Brother," O thou heavenly Bird!

— SIDNEY LANIER: from *To Our Mocking-Bird*

By Keats's soul, the man who never stepped
 In gradual progress like another man,
 But, turning grandly on his central self,
 Ensphered himself in twenty perfect years
 And died, not young, (the life of a long life

Distilled to a mere drop, falling like a tear
 Upon the world's cold cheek to make it burn
 Forever;) by that strong excepted soul,
 I count it strange and hard to understand
 That nearly all young poets should write old.

— ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING: from *Aurora Leigh*.

So far as in it lay, this century has caused every one of its great men, whose hearts were kindest, and whose spirits most perceptive of the work of God, to die without hope: — Scott, Keats, Byron, Shelley, Turner. Great England, of the Iron-heart now, not of the Lion-heart; for these souls of her children an account may perhaps be one day required of her. — JOHN RUSKIN: from *Modern Painters*.

Within a narrow span of time,
 Three princes of the realm of rhyme,
 At height of youth or manhood's prime,
 From earth took wing,
 To join the fellowship sublime
 Who, dead, yet sing.

He, first, his earliest wreath who wove
 Of laurel grown in Latmian grove,
 Conquered by pain and hapless love
 Found calmer home,
 Roofed by the heaven that glows above
 Eternal Rome.

A fierier soul, its own fierce prey,
 And cumbered with more mortal clay,

At Missolonghi flamed away,
 And left the air
 Reverberating to this day
 Its loud despair.

Alike remote from Byron's scorn,
 And Keats's magic as of morn
 Bursting for ever newly-born
 On forests old,
 Waking a hoary world forlorn
 With touch of gold,

Shelley, the cloud-begot, who grew
 Nourished on air and sun and dew,
 Into that Essence whence he drew
 His life and lyre
 Was fittingly resolved anew
 Through wave and fire.

— WILLIAM WATSON, from *Shelley's Centenary*.

The weltering London ways where children weep
 And girls whom none call maidens laugh, — strange road
 Miring his outward steps, who inly trode
 The bright Castalian brink and Latmos' steep: —
 Even such his life's cross-paths; till deathly deep
 He toiled through sands of Lethe; and long pain,
 Weary with labour spurned and love found vain,
 In dead Rome's sheltering shadow wrapped his sleep.

O pang-dowered Poet, whose reverberant lips
 And heart-strung lyre awoke the Moon's eclipse, —
 Thou whom the daisies glory in growing o'er, —

Their fragrance clings around thy name, not writ
 But rumour'd in water, while the fame of it
 Along Time's flood goes echoing evermore.

— DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI, Sonnet on *John Keats*.

The young Endymion sleeps Endymion's sleep;
 The shepherd-boy whose tale was left half told!
 The solemn grove uplifts its shield of gold
 To the red rising moon, and loud and deep
 The nightingale is singing from the steep;
 It is midsummer, but the air is cold;
 Can it be death? Alas, beside the fold
 A shepherd's pipe lies shattered near his sheep.
 Lo! in the moonlight gleams a marble white,
 On which I read: "Here lieth one whose name
 Was writ in water." And was this the meed
 Of his sweet singing? Rather let me write:
 "The smoking flax before it burst to flame
 Was quenched by death, and broken the bruised reed."
 — HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW, Sonnet on *Keats*.

Thy songs were not in vain:

Fixed in the world's large memory they shall live
 Undying as that beauty to whose shrine
 Thy kneeling soul brought all thou hadst to give:
 All things of which thy heart once dreamed are thine.
 — ROBERT BURNS WILSON, from *Keats*.

And why should we lament
 The bitterness that marred not — nay, made pure
 And free of fear?

We do not think the Beautiful was soiled,
 The melody made less joyful to his ear,
 And all else is gone past for evermore.

— WILLIAM BELL SCOTT, from *Ode to Keats*.

By the Aurelian Wall,
 Where the long shadows of the centuries fall
 From Caius Cestius' tomb,
 A weary mortal seeking rest found room
 For quiet burial,

Leaving among his friends
 A book of lyrics.

* * * * *

And so his splendid name,
 Who left the book of lyrics and small fame
 Among his fellows then,
 Spreads through the world like autumn — who knows
 when ? —
 Till all the hillsides flame.

Even the shadows tall,
 Walking at sundown through the plain, recall
 A mound the grasses keep,
 Where once a mortal came and found long sleep
 By the Aurelian Wall.

— BLISS CARMAN, *By the Aurelian Wall*.

Like listless lullabies of twilight seas
 Heard from still coves, and soft and sad as these : —

Such is the echo of his perfect song —
It lives, it lingers long !

Beside his fame Hyperion's lustre pales,
Sweeter his own song than his nightingale's ;
No voice speaks, in the century that has fled,
So deathless from the dead !

How many stately epics have been tossed
Rudely against Time's shore and wreck'd and lost,
While Keats, the dreaming boy, floats down Time's sea
His lyric argosy !

— FREDERICK LAWRENCE KNOWLES, *With a Copy of Keats.*

You inquire my books. For poets, I have Keats, and Mr. and Mrs. Browning. For prose, Mr. Ruskin, Sir Thomas Browne, and the "Revelations."

— EMILY DICKINSON, Letter of April 26, 1862.

Angel of Sleep or Death ! whom hast thou here
With meek head drooped, all haggard and outworn !
So looked Leander, to the startled morn,
Left by the tide on sands and rushes sere ;
And so looked Hyacinth, to Phœbus dear,
As on the sward he lay, by envy shorn ;
So looked Rome's martyr youth to burial borne
Within some delved cavern, chill and drear.
O fair death-sleeper ! gazing on thee now,
Forgetting all thy years profound of rest
In peaceful barrow by the daisy drest,
We keep a vigil, — by thy pillow bow,

And listen, smiling through our tears, when thou
Murm'rest of flowers that spring above thy breast.

— EDITH M. THOMAS, *On Severn's Last Sketch of Keats*.

Something there is in Death not all unkind ;
He hath a gentler aspect, looking back ;
For flowers may bloom in the dread thunder's track,
And even the cloud that struck with light was lined.
Thus, when the heart is silent, speaks the mind ;
But there are moments when comes rushing, black
And fierce upon us, the old, awful lack,
And Death once more is cruel, senseless, blind.

So when I saw beside a Roman portal
“ In this house died John Keats ” — for tears that sprung
I could no further read. O bard immortal !
Not for thy fame's sake — but so young, so young ;
Such beauty vanished ; spilled such heavenly wine ;
All quenched that power of deathless song divine !

— RICHARD WATSON GILDER, *An Inscription in Rome*.

Great soul, thou sittest with me in my room,
Uplifting me with thy vast, quiet eyes,
On whose full orbs, with kindly lustre, lies
The twilight warmth of ruddy ember-gloom :
Thy clear, strong tones will oft bring sudden bloom
Of hope secure, to him who lonely cries,
Wrestling with the young poet's agonies,
Neglect and scorn, which seem a certain doom :
Yes ! the few words which, like great thunder-drops,
Thy large heart down to earth shook doubtfully,

Thrilled by the inward lightning of its might,
Serene and pure, like gushing joy of light,
Shall rack the eternal chords of Destiny,
After the moon-led pulse of ocean stops.

— JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL, *To the Spirit of Keats*.

The world thinks of his youthful shade among the blest
as the one permitted to sit at Shakespeare's feet.

— EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN, from *The Nature and
Elements of Poetry*.

NOTE.

For further acquaintance with Keats, the student is referred to the following books:—

“The Poetical Works and Other Writings of John Keats, edited, with notes and appendices, by H. Buxton Forman.” 5 vols. (The exhaustive and authoritative edition.)

The works of Keats, or selections, have been edited with critical care by other students, notably by Francis T. Palgrave, by William T. Arnold, by William Michael Rossetti, and, in the Cambridge edition, by Horace E. Scudder.

“Life and Letters,” by R. Monckton Milnes, Lord Houghton. (First of the biographies and foundation of all the rest, but lacking the data that have come to light since 1867.)

“Life,” by Sidney Colvin. “English Men of Letters” series. (The best biography. List of authorities given in preface.)

“Life,” by William Michael Rossetti. “Great Writers” series. (Anderson’s bibliography in appendix.)

Among the most valuable of the critical studies on Keats are those by Matthew Arnold (“Essays in Criticism,” second series), James Russell Lowell (“Among My Books,” second series), David Masson (“Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, etc.”), and F. M. Owen (“John Keats, A Study”).

THE EVE OF ST. AGNES AND OTHER POEMS.



THE EVE OF ST. AGNES.

I.

ST. AGNES' EVE — Ah, bitter chill it was!
The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold;
The hare limp'd trembling through the frozen grass,
And silent was the flock in woolly fold:
Numb were the Beadsman's fingers, while he told
His rosary, and while his frosted breath,
Like pious incense from a censer old,
Seem'd taking flight for heaven, without a death,
Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his prayer he saith.

II.

His prayer he saith, this patient, holy man;
Then takes his lamp, and riseth from his knees,
And back returneth, meagre, barefoot, wan,
Along the chapel aisle by slow degrees:
The sculptur'd dead, on each side, seem to freeze,
Emprison'd in black, purgatorial rails:
Knights, ladies, praying in dumb orat'ries,
He passeth by; and his weak spirit fails
To think how they may ache in icy hoods and mails.

III.

Northward he turneth through a little door,
And scarce three steps, ere Music's golden tongue
Flatter'd to tears this aged man and poor;

But no — already had his deathbell rung;
The joys of all his life were said and sung:
His was harsh penance on St. Agnes' Eve:
Another way he went, and soon among
Rough ashes sat he for his soul's reprieve,
And all night kept awake, for sinners' sake to grieve.

IV.

That ancient Beadsman heard the prelude soft;
And so it chanc'd, for many a door was wide,
From hurry to and fro. Soon, up aloft,
The silver, snarling trumpets 'gan to chide:
The level chambers, ready with their pride,
Were glowing to receive a thousand guests:
The carved angels, ever eager-ey'd,
Star'd, where upon their heads the cornice rests,
With hair blown back, and wings put cross-wise on their
breasts.

V.

At length burst in the argent revelry,
With plume, tiara, and all rich array,
Numerous as shadows haunting faerily
The brain, new stuff'd, in youth, with triumphs gay
Of old romance. These let us wish away,
And turn, sole-thoughted, to one Lady there,
Whose heart had brooded, all that wintry day,
On love, and wing'd St. Agnes' saintly care,
As she had heard old dames full many times declare.

VI.

They told her how, upon St. Agnes' Eve,
Young virgins might have visions of delight,
And soft adorings from their loves receive
Upon the honey'd middle of the night,
If ceremonies due they did aright;

As, supperless to bed they must retire,
And couch supine their beauties, lily white;
Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require
Of Heaven with upward eyes for all that they desire.

VII.

Full of this whim was thoughtful Madeline:
The music, yearning like a God in pain,
She scarcely heard: her maiden eyes divine,
Fix'd on the floor, saw many a sweeping train
Pass by — she heeded not at all: in vain
Came many a tiptoe, amorous cavalier,
And back retir'd; not cool'd by high disdain,
But she saw not: her heart was elsewhere:
She sigh'd for Agnes' dreams, the sweetest of the year.

VIII.

She danc'd along with vague, regardless eyes,
Anxious her lips, her breathing quick and short:
The hallow'd hour was near at hand: she sighs
Amid the timbrels, and the throng'd resort
Of whisperers in anger, or in sport;
'Mid looks of love, defiance, hate, and scorn,
Hood-wink'd with faery fancy; all amort,
Save to St. Agnes and her lambs unshorn,
And all the bliss to be before to-morrow morn.

IX.

So, purposing each moment to retire,
She linger'd still. Meantime, across the moors,
Had come young Porphyro, with heart on fire
For Madeline. Beside the portal doors,
Buttress'd from moonlight, stands he, and implores
All saints to give him sight of Madeline,
But for one moment in the tedious hours,

That he might gaze and worship all unseen ;
Perchance speak, kneel, touch, kiss — in sooth, such things
have been.

X.

He ventures in : let no buzz'd whisper tell :
All eyes be muffled, or a hundred swords
Will storm his heart, Love's fev'rous citadel :
For him, those chambers held barbarian hordes,
Hyena foemen, and hot-blooded lords,
Whose very dogs would execrations howl
Against his lineage : not one breast affords
Him any mercy, in that mansion foul,
Save one old beldame, weak in body and in soul.

XI.

Ah, happy chance ! the aged creature came,
Shuffling along with ivory-headed wand,
To where he stood, hid from the torch's flame,
Behind a broad hall-pillar, far beyond
The sound of merriment and chorus bland :
He startled her ; but soon she knew his face,
And grasp'd his fingers in her palsied hand,
Saying, " Mercy, Porphyro ! hie thee from this place ;
They are all here to-night, the whole blood-thirsty race !

XII.

" Get hence ! get hence ! there's dwarfish Hildebrand ;
He had a fever late, and in the fit
He cursed thee and thine, both house and land :
Then there's that old Lord Maurice, not a whit
More tame for his gray hairs — Alas me ! flit !
Flit like a ghost away." — " Ah, Gossip dear,
We're safe enough ; here in this arm-chair sit,
And tell me how " — " Good Saints ! not here, not here ;
Follow me, child, or else these stones will be thy bier."

XIII.

He follow'd through a lowly arched way,
Brushing the cobwebs with his lofty plume,
And as she mutter'd "Well-a — well-a-day!"
He found him in a little moonlight room,
Pale, lattic'd, chill, and silent as a tomb.
"Now tell me where is Madeline," said he,
"O tell me, Angela, by the holy loom
Which none but secret sisterhood may see,
When they St. Agnes' wool are weaving piously."

XIV.

"St. Agnes! Ah! it is St. Agnes' Eve —
Yet men will murder upon holy days:
Thou must hold water in a witch's sieve,
And be liege-lord of all the Elves and Fays,
To venture so; it fills me with amaze
To see thee, Porphyro! — St. Agnes' Eve!
God's help! my lady fair the conjuror plays
This very night: good angels her deceive!
But let me laugh awhile, I've mickle time to grieve."

XV.

Feebly she laugheth in the languid moon,
While Porphyro upon her face doth look,
Like puzzled urchin on an aged crone
Who keepeth clos'd a wond'rous riddle-book,
As spectacled she sits in chimney nook.
But soon his eyes grew brilliant, when she told
His lady's purpose; and he scarce could brook
Tears, at the thought of those enchantments cold,
And Madeline asleep in lap of legends old.

XVI.

Sudden a thought came like a full-blown rose,
Flushing his brow, and in his pained heart
Made purple riot: then doth he propose
A stratagem, that makes the beldame start:
“A cruel man and impious thou art:
Sweet lady, let her pray, and sleep, and dream
Alone with her good angels, far apart
From wicked men like thee. Go! go!—I deem
Thou canst not surely be the same that thou didst seem.”

XVII.

“I will not harm her, by all saints I swear,”
Quoth Porphyro: “O may I ne’er find grace
When my weak voice shall whisper its last prayer,
If one of her soft ringlets I displace,
Or look with ruffian passion in her face:
Good Angela, believe me by these tears;
Or I will, even in a moment’s space,
Awake, with horrid shout, my foemen’s ears,
And beard them, though they be more fang’d than wolves
and bears.”

XVIII.

“Ah! why wilt thou affright a feeble soul?
A poor, weak, palsy-stricken, church-yard thing,
Whose passing-bell may ere the midnight toll;
Whose prayers for thee, each morn and evening,
Were never miss’d.”—Thus plaining, doth she bring
A gentler speech from burning Porphyro;
So woful, and of such deep sorrowing,
That Angela gives promise she will do
Whatever he shall wish, betide her weal or woe.

XIX.

Which was, to lead him, in close secrecy,
Even to Madeline's chamber, and there hide
Him in a closet, of such privacy
That he might see her beauty unespy'd,
And win perhaps that night a peerless bride,
While legion'd faeries pac'd the coverlet,
And pale enchantment held her sleepy-ey'd.
Never on such a night have lovers met,
Since Merlin paid his Demon all the monstrous debt.

XX.

"It shall be as thou wishest," said the Dame :
"All cates and dainties shall be stored there
Quickly on this feast-night; by the tambour frame
Her own lute thou wilt see: no time to spare,
For I am slow and feeble, and scarce dare
On such a catering trust my dizzy head.
Wait here, my child, with patience; kneel in prayer
The while: Ah! thou must needs the lady wed,
Or I may never leave my grave among the dead."

XXI.

So saying, she hobbled off with busy fear.
The lover's endless minutes slowly pass'd;
The dame return'd, and whisper'd in his ear
To follow her; with aged eyes aghast
From fright of dim espial. Safe at last,
Through many a dusky gallery, they gain
The maiden's chamber, silken, hush'd, and chaste;
Where Porphyro took covert, pleas'd amain.
His poor guide hurried back with agues in her brain.

XXII.

Her faltering hand upon the balustrade,
Old Angela was feeling for the stair,
When Madeline, St. Agnes' charmed maid,
Rose, like a mission'd spirit, unaware :
With silver taper's light, and pious care,
She turn'd, and down the aged gossip led
To a safe level matting. Now prepare,
Young Porphyro, for gazing on that bed ;
She comes, she comes again, like ring-dove fray'd and fled.

XXIII.

Out went the taper as she hurried in ;
Its little smoke, in pallid moonshine, died :
She clos'd the door, she panted, all akin
To spirits of the air, and visions wide :
No uttered syllable, or, woe betide !
But to her heart, her heart was voluble,
Paining with eloquence her balmy side ;
As though a tongueless nightingale should swell
Her throat in vain, and die, heart-stifled, in her dell.

XXIV.

A casement high and triple-arch'd there was,
All garlanded with carven imag'ries
Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches of knot-grass,
And diamonded with panes of quaint device,
Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,
As are the tiger-moth's deep-damask'd wings ;
And in the midst, 'mong thousand heraldries,
And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings,
A shielded scutcheon blush'd with blood of queens and
kings.

XXV.

Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,
And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast,
As down she knelt for heaven's grace and boon;
Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together prest,
And on her silver cross soft amethyst,
And on her hair a glory, like a saint:
She seem'd a splendid angel, newly drest,
Save wings, for heaven: — Porphyro grew faint:
She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from mortal taint.

XXVI.

Anon his heart revives: her vespers done,
Of all its wreathed pearls her hair she frees;
Unclasps her warmed jewels one by one;
Loosens her fragrant bodice; by degrees
Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees:
Half-hidden, like a mermaid in sea-weed,
Pensive awhile she dreams awake, and sees,
In fancy, fair St. Agnes in her bed,
But dares not look behind, or all the charm is fled.

XXVII.

Soon, trembling in her soft and chilly nest,
In sort of wakeful swoon, perplex'd she lay,
Until the poppi'd warmth of sleep oppress'd
Her soothed limbs, and soul fatigued away;
Flown, like a thought, until the morrow-day;
Blissfully haven'd both from joy and pain;
Clasp'd like a missal where swart Paynims pray;
Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,
As though a rose should shut, and be a bud again.

XXVIII.

Stol'n to this paradise, and so entranced,
Porphyro gaz'd upon her empty dress,
And listen'd to her breathing, if it chanced
To wake into a slumberous tenderness;
Which when he heard, that minute did he bless,
And breath'd himself: then from the closet crept,
Noiseless as fear in a wide wilderness,
And over the hush'd carpet, silent, stept,
And 'tween the curtains peep'd, where, lo! — how fast she
slept.

XXIX.

Then by the bedside, where the faded moon
Made a dim, silver twilight, soft he set
A table, and, half-anguish'd, threw thereon
A cloth of woven crimson, gold, and jet: —
O for some drowsy Morphean amulet!
The boisterous, midnight, festive clarion,
The kettle-drum, and far-heard clarionet,
Affray his ears, though but in dying tone: —
The hall-door shuts again, and all the noise is gone.

XXX.

And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep,
In blanched linen, smooth, and lavender'd,
While he from forth the closet brought a heap
Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd;
With jellies smoother than the creamy curd,
And lucent syrups, tinct with cinnamon;
Manna and dates, in argosy transferr'd
From Fez; and spiced dainties, every one,
From silken Samarcand to cedar'd Lebanon.

XXXI.

These delicacies he heap'd with glowing hand
On golden dishes and in baskets bright
Of wreathed silver: sumptuous they stand
In the retired quiet of the night,
Filling the chilly room with perfume light. —
“And now, my love, my seraph fair, awake!
Thou art my heaven, and I thine hermit:
Open thine eyes, for meek St. Agnes' sake,
Or I shall drowse beside thee, so my soul doth ache.”

XXXII.

Thus whispering, his warm, unnerved arm
Sank in her pillow. Shaded was her dream
By the dusk curtains: — 'twas a midnight charm
Impossible to melt as iced stream:
The lustrous salvers in the moonlight gleam;
Broad golden fringe upon the carpet lies:
It seem'd he never, never could redeem
From such a steadfast spell his lady's eyes;
So mus'd awhile, entoil'd in woofed phantasies.

XXXIII.

Awakening up, he took her hollow lute, —
Tumultuous, — and, in chords that tenderest be,
He play'd an ancient ditty, long since mute,
In Provence call'd, “La belle dame sans mercy:”
Close to her ear touching the melody; —
Wherewith disturb'd, she utter'd a soft moan:
He ceas'd — she panted quick — and suddenly
Her blue affrayed eyes wide open shone:
Upon his knees he sank, pale as smooth-sculptured stone.

XXXIV.

Her eyes were open, but she still beheld,
Now wide awake, the vision of her sleep :
There was a painful change, that nigh expell'd
The blisses of her dream so pure and deep
At which fair Madeline began to weep,
And moan forth witless words with many a sigh ;
While still her gaze on Porphyro would keep ;
Who knelt, with joined hands and piteous eye,
Fearing to move or speak, she look'd so dreamingly.

XXXV.

“ Ah, Porphyro ! ” said she, “ but even now
Thy voice was at sweet tremble in mine ear,
Made tuneable with every sweetest vow ;
And those sad eyes were spiritual and clear :
How chang'd thou art ! how pallid, chill, and drear
Give me that voice again, my Porphyro,
Those looks immortal, those complainings dear !
Oh leave me not in this eternal woe,
For if thou diest, my Love, I know not where to go.”

XXXVI.

Beyond a mortal man impassion'd far
At these voluptuous accents, he arose,
Ethereal, flush'd, and like a throbbing star
Seen mid the sapphire heaven's deep repose ;
Into her dream he melted, as the rose
Blendeth its odor with the violet, —
Solution sweet : meantime the frost-wind blows
Like Love's alarum pattering the sharp sleet
Against the window panes ; St. Agnes' moon hath set.

XXXVII.

'Tis dark : quick pattereth the flaw-blown sleet :
"This is no dream, my bride, my Madeline!"
'Tis dark : the iced gusts still rave and beat :
"No dream, alas ! alas ! and woe is mine !
Porphyro will leave me here to fade and pine. —
Cruel ! what traitor could thee hither bring ?
I curse not, for my heart is lost in thine,
Though thou forsakest a deceived thing ; —
A dove forlorn and lost with sick unpruned wing."

XXXVIII.

"My Madeline ! sweet dreamer ! lovely bride !
Say, may I be for aye thy vassal blest ?
Thy beauty's shield, heart-shap'd and vermeil-dy'd ?
Ah, silver shrine, here will I take my rest
After so many hours of toil and quest,
A famish'd pilgrim, — sav'd by miracle.
Though I have found, I will not rob thy nest
Saving of thy sweet self ; if thou think'st well
To trust, fair Madeline, to no rude infidel.

XXXIX.

"Hark ! 'tis an elfin-storm from faery land,
Of haggard seeming, but a boon indeed :
Arise — arise ! the morning is at hand ; —
The bloated wassailers will never heed : —
Let us away, my love, with happy speed ;
There are no ears to hear, or eyes to see, —
Drown'd all in Rhenish and the sleepy mead :
Awake ! arise ! my love, and fearless be,
For o'er the southern moors I have a home for thee."

XL.

She hurried at his words, beset with fears,
For there were sleeping dragons all around,
At glaring watch, perhaps, with ready spears —
Down the wide stairs a darkling way they found. —
In all the house was heard no human sound.
A chain-droop'd lamp was flickering by each door;
The arras, rich with horseman, hawk, and hound,
Flutter'd in the besieging wind's uproar;
And the long carpets rose along the gusty floor.

XLI.

They glide, like phantoms, into the wide hall;
Like phantoms, to the iron porch, they glide;
Where lay the Porter, in uneasy sprawl,
With a huge empty flagon by his side:
The wakeful blood-hound rose, and shook his hide,
But his sagacious eye an inmate owns:
By one, and one, the bolts full easy slide: —
The chains lie silent on the footworn stones; —
The key turns, and the door upon its hinges groans.

XLII.

And they are gone: aye, ages long ago
These lovers fled away into the storm.
That night the Baron dreamt of many a woe,
And all his warrior-guests, with shade and form
Of witch, and demon, and large coffin-worm,
Were long be-nightmar'd. Angela the old
Died palsy-twitch'd, with meagre face deform;
The Beadsman, after thousand aves told,
For aye unsought-for slept among his ashes cold.

THE EVE OF ST. MARK.

A FRAGMENT.

UPON a Sabbath-day it fell ;
Twice holy was the Sabbath-bell,
That call'd the folk to evening prayer ;
The city streets were clean and fair
From wholesome drench of April rains ;
And, on the western window panes,
The chilly sunset faintly told
Of unmatur'd green valleys cold,
Of the green thorny bloomless hedge,
Of rivers new with spring-tide sedge,
Of primroses by shelter'd rills,
And daisies on the aguish hills.
Twice holy was the Sabbath-bell :
The silent streets were crowded well
With staid and pious companies,
Warm from their fireside orat'ries ;
And moving, with demurest air,
To even-song, and vesper prayer.
Each arched porch, and entry low,
Was fill'd with patient folk and slow,
With whispers hush, and shuffling feet,
While play'd the organ loud and sweet.

The bells had ceas'd, the prayers begun,
And Bertha had not yet half done
A curious volume, patch'd and torn,
That all day long, from earliest morn,

Had taken captive her two eyes,
Among its golden broideries ;
Perplex'd her with a thousand things, —
The stars of Heaven, and angels' wings,
Martyrs in a fiery blaze,
Azure saints and silver rays,
Moses' breastplate, and the seven
Candlesticks John saw in Heaven,
The winged Lion of St. Mark,
And the Covenantal Ark,
With its many mysteries,
Cherubim and golden mice.

Bertha was a maiden fair,
Dwelling in th' old Minster-square ;
From her fireside she could see,
Sidelong, its rich antiquity,
Far as the Bishop's garden-wall ;
Where sycamores and elm-trees tall,
Full-leav'd, the forest had outstript,
By no sharp north-wind ever nipt,
So shelter'd by the mighty pile.
Bertha arose, and read awhile,
With forehead 'gainst the window pane.
Again she try'd, and then again,
Until the dusk eve left her dark
Upon the legend of St. Mark.
From plaited lawn-frill, fine and thin,
She lifted up her soft warm chin,
With aching neck and swimming eyes,
And daz'd with saintly imageries.

All was gloom, and silent all,
Save now and then the still foot-fall
Of one returning homewards late,
Past the echoing minster-gate.

The clamorous daws, that all the day
Above tree-tops and towers play,
Pair by pair had gone to rest,
Each in its ancient belfry-nest,
Where asleep they fall betimes,
To music and the drowsy chimes.

All was silent, all was gloom,
Abroad and in the homely room :
Down she sat, poor cheated soul !
And struck a lamp from the dismal coal ;
Lean'd forward, with bright drooping hair
And slant book, full against the glare.
Her shadow, in uneasy guise,
Hover'd about, a giant size,
On ceiling-beam and old oak chair,
The parrot's cage, and panel square ;
And the warm angled winter-screen,
On which were many monsters seen,
Call'd doves of Siam, Lima mice,
And legless birds of Paradise,
Macaw, and tender Avadavat,
And silken-furr'd Angora cat.
Untired she read, her shadow still
Glower'd about, as it would fill
The room with wildest forms and shades,
As though some ghostly queen of spades
Had come to mock behind her back,
And dance, and ruffle her garments black.
Untir'd she read the legend page,
Of holy Mark, from youth to age,
On land, on sea, in pagan chains,
Rejoicing for his many pains.
Sometimes the learned eremite,
With golden star, or dagger bright,

Referr'd to pious poesies
Written in smallest crow-quill size
Beneath the text; and thus the rhyme
Was parcell'd out from time to time:
—“Als writith he of swevenis,
Men han beforne they wake in bliss,
Whanne that hir friendes thinke him bound
In crimped shroude farre under grounde;
And how a litling child mote be
A saint er its nativitie,
Gif that the modre (God her blesse!)
Kepen in solitarinesse,
And kissen devoute the holy croce.
Of Goddes loves, and Sathan's force, —
He writith; and thinges many mo
Of swiche thinges I may not show.
But I must tellen verilie
Somdel of Saintè Cicilie,
And chieflie what he auctorethe
Of Saintè Markis life and dethe:”

At length her constant eyelids come
Upon the fervent martyrdom;
Then lastly to his holy shrine,
Exalt amid the tapers' shine
At Venice, —

ODES.

ODE ON A GRECIAN URN.

I.

THOU still unravish'd bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:
What leaf-fring'd legend haunts about thy shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

II.

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal — yet, do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

III.

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;

And, happy melodist, unwearied,
 For ever piping songs for ever new ;
 More happy love ! more happy, happy love !
 For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,
 For ever panting, and for ever young ;
 All breathing human passion far above,
 That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,
 A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

IV.

Who are these coming to the sacrifice ?
 To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
 Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
 And all her silken flanks with garlands drest ?
 What little town by river or sea shore,
 Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
 Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn ?
 And, little town, thy streets for evermore
 Will silent be ; and not a soul to tell
 Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

V.

O Attic shape ! Fair attitude ! with brede
 Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
 With forest branches and the trodden weed ;
 Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
 As doth eternity : Cold Pastoral !
 When old age shall this generation waste,
 Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
 Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
 " Beauty is truth, truth beauty," — that is all
 Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

ODE TO PSYCHE.

I.

O GODDESS ! hear these tuneless numbers, wrung
By sweet enforcement and remembrance dear,
And pardon that thy secrets should be sung
Even into thine own soft-conched ear :
Surely I dreamt to-day, or did I see
The winged Psyche with awaken'd eyes ?
I wander'd in a forest thoughtlessly,
And, on a sudden, fainting with surprise,
Saw two fair creatures, couched side by side
In deepest grass, beneath the whisp'ring roof
Of leaves and trembled blossoms, where there ran
A brooklet, scarce espied :

II.

'Mid hush'd, cool-rooted flowers, fragrant-eyed,
Blue, silver-white, and budded Tyrian,
They lay calm-breathing, on the bedded grass ;
Their arms embraced, and their pinions too ;
Their lips touch'd not, but had not bade adieu,
As if disjoined by soft-handed slumber,
And ready still past kisses to outnumber
At tender eye-dawn of aureorean love :
The winged boy I knew ;
But who wast thou, O happy, happy dove ?
His Psyche true !

III.

O latest-born and loveliest vision far
Of all Olympus' faded hierarchy !

Fairer than Phœbe's sapphire-region'd star,
Or Vesper, amorous glow-worm of the sky ;
Fairer than these, though temple thou hast none,
Nor altar heap'd with flowers ;
Nor virgin-choir to make delicious moan
Upon the midnight hours ;
No voice, no lute, no pipe, no incense sweet
From chain-swung censer teeming ;
No shrine, no grove, no oracle, no heat
Of pale-mouth'd prophet dreaming.

IV.

O brightest ! though too late for antique vows,
Too, too late for the fond believing lyre,
When holy were the haunted forest boughs,
Holy the air, the water, and the fire ;
Yet even in these days so far retir'd
From happy pieties, thy lucent fans,
Fluttering among the faint Olympians,
I see, and sing, by my own eyes inspir'd.
So let me be thy choir, and make a moan
Upon the midnight hours ;
Thy voice, thy lute, thy pipe, thy incense sweet
From swung censer teeming ;
Thy shrine, thy grove, thy oracle, thy heat
Of pale-mouth'd prophet dreaming.

V.

Yes, I will be thy priest, and build a fane
In some untrodden region of my mind,
Where branched thoughts, new-grown with pleasant pain,
Instead of pines shall murmur in the wind :
Far, far around shall those dark-cluster'd trees
Fledge the wild-ridged mountains steep by steep ;

And there by zephyrs, streams, and birds, and bees,
 The moss-lain Dryads shall be lull'd to sleep ;
 And in the midst of this wide quietness
 A rosy sanctuary will I dress
 With the wreath'd trellis of a working brain,
 With buds, and bells, and stars without a name,
 With all the gardener Fancy e'er could feign,
 Who breeding flowers, will never breed the same :
 And there shall be for thee all soft delight
 That shadowy thought can win,
 A bright torch, and a casement ope at night,
 To let the warm Love in !

ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE.

I.

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
 My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
 Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
 One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk :
 'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
 But being too happy in thine happiness, —
 That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees,
 In some melodious plot
 Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
 Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

II.

O for a draught of vintage ! that hath been
 Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth,
 Tasting of Flora and the country green,
 Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth !

O for a beaker full of the warm South,
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
And purple-stained mouth;
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
And with thee fade away into the forest dim: •

III.

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
What thou among the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-ey'd despairs,
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

IV.

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:
Already with thee! tender is the night,
And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays;
But here there is no light,
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

V.

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,

But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet
Wherewith the seasonable month endows
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;
Fast fading violets cover'd up in leaves;
And mid-May's eldest child,
The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
The murmurous haunt of flies in summer eves.

VI.

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful Death,
Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath;
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy!
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain —
To thy high requiem become a sod.

VII.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
No hungry generations tread thee down;
The voice I hear this passing night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown:
Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
The same that oft-times hath
Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

VIII.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
 To toll me back from thee to my sole self!
 Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
 As she is famed to do, deceiving elf.
 Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades
 Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
 Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep
 In the next valley-glades:
 Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
 Fled is that music: — Do I wake or sleep?

ODE ON MELANCHOLY.

No, no, go not to Lethe, neither twist
 Wolf's-bane, tight-rooted, for its poisonous wine;
 Nor suffer thy pale forehead to be kiss'd
 By nightshade, ruby grape of Proserpine;
 Make not your rosary of yew-berries,
 Nor let the beetle, nor the death-moth be
 Your mournful Psyche; nor the downy owl
 A partner in your sorrow's mysteries;
 For shade to shade will come too drowsily,
 And drown the wakeful anguish of the soul.

But when the melancholy fit shall fall
 Sudden from heaven like a weeping cloud,
 That fosters the droop-headed flowers all,
 And hides the green hill in an April shroud;
 Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose,
 Or on the rainbow of the salt sand-wave,
 Or on the wealth of globed peonies;
 Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows,
 Emprison her soft hand, and let her rave,
 And feed deep, deep upon her peerless eyes.

She dwells with Beauty — Beauty that must die ;
 And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips
 Bidding adieu ; and aching Pleasure nigh,
 Turning to poison while the bee-mouth sips :
 Ay, in the very temple of Delight
 Veil'd Melancholy has her sovran shrine,
 Though seen of none save him whose strenuous tongue
 Can burst Joy's grape against his palate fine ;
 His soul shall taste the sadness of her might,
 And be among her cloudy trophies hung.

ODE ON INDOLENCE.

“They toil not, neither do they spin.”

I.

ONE morn before me were three figures seen,
 With bowed necks, and joined hands, side-faced ;
 And one behind the other stepp'd serene,
 In placid sandals, and in white robes graced ;
 They pass'd, like figures on a marble urn,
 When shifted round to see the other side ;
 They came again ; as when the urn once more
 Is shifted round, the first seen shades return ;
 And they were strange to me, as may betide
 With vases, to one deep in Phidian lore.

II.

How is it, Shadows ! that I knew ye not ?
 How came ye muffled in so huſh a mask ?
 Was it a silent, deep-disguised plot
 To steal away, and leave without a task
 My idle days ? Ripe was the drowsy hour ;
 The blissful cloud of summer-indolence
 Benumb'd my eyes ; my pulse grew less and less ;

Pain had no sting, and pleasure's wreath no flower :
 O, why did ye not melt, and leave my sense
 Unhaunted quite of all but — nothingness ?

III.

A third time pass'd they by, and, passing, turn'd
 Each one the face a moment whiles to me ;
 Then faded, and to follow them I burn'd
 And ach'd for wings, because I knew the three ;
 The first was a fair Maid, and Love her name ;
 The second was Ambition, pale of cheek,
 And ever watchful with fatigued eye ;
 The last, whom I love more, the more of blame
 Is heap'd upon her, maiden most unmeek, —
 I knew to be my demon Poesy.

IV.

They faded, and, forsooth ! I wanted wings :
 O folly ! What is Love ? and where is it ?
 And for that poor Ambition ! it springs
 From a man's little heart's short fever-fit ;
 For Poesy ! — no, — she has not a joy, —
 At least for me, — so sweet as drowsy noons,
 And evenings steep'd in honied indolence ;
 O, for an age so shelter'd from annoy,
 That I may never know how change the moons,
 Or hear the voice of busy common-sense !

V.

And once more came they by ; — alas ! wherefore ?
 My sleep had been embroider'd with dim dreams ;
 My soul had been a lawn besprinkled o'er
 With flowers, and stirring shades, and baffled beams :

The morn was clouded, but no shower fell,
 Tho' in her lids hung the sweet tears of May;
 The open casement press'd a new-leav'd vine,
 Let in the budding warmth and throstle's lay;
 O Shadows! 'twas a time to bid farewell!
 Upon your skirts had fallen no tears of mine.

VI.

So, ye three Ghosts, adieu! Ye cannot raise
 My head cool-bedded in the flowery grass;
 For I would not be dieted with praise,
 A pet-lamb in a sentimental farce!
 Fade softly from my eyes, and be once more
 In masque-like figures on the dreamy urn;
 Farewell! I yet have visions for the night,
 And for the day faint visions there is store;
 Vanish, ye Phantoms! from my idle spright,
 Into the clouds, and nevermore return!

TO AUTUMN.

I.

SEASON of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
 Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
 Conspiring with him how to load and bless
 With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run;
 To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
 And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
 To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
 With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
 And still more, later flowers for the bees,
 Until they think warm days will never cease,
 For Summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.

II.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store ?
 Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
 Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
 Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind ;
 Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
 Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
 Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers :
 And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
 Steady thy laden head across a brook ;
 Or by a cider-press, with patient look,
 Thou watchest the last oozy hours by hours.

III.

Where are the songs of Spring ? Ay, where are they ?
 Think not of them, thou hast thy music too, —
 While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
 And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue ;
 Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
 Among the river sallows, borne aloft
 Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies ;
 And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn ;
 Hedge-crickets sing ; and now with treble soft
 The redbreast whistles from a garden-croft ;
 And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

ODE: BARDS OF PASSION AND OF MIRTH.

BARDS of Passion and of Mirth,
 Ye have left your souls on earth !
 Have ye souls in heaven too,
 Double-liv'd in regions new ?
 Yes, and those of heaven commune
 With the spheres of sun and moon ;

With the noise of fountains wond'rous
 And the parle of voices thund'rous ;
 With the whisper of heaven's trees
 And one another, in soft ease
 Seated on Elysian lawns
 Brows'd by none but Dian's fawns ;
 Underneath large blue-bells tented,
 Where the daisies are rose-scented,
 And the rose herself has got
 Perfume which on earth is not ;
 Where the nightingale doth sing
 Not a senseless, tranced thing,
 But divine melodious truth ;
 Philosophic numbers smooth ;
 Tales and golden histories
 Of heaven and its mysteries.

Thus ye live on high, and then
 On the earth ye live again ;
 And the souls ye left behind you
 Teach us, here, the way to find you,
 Where your other souls are joying,
 Never slumber'd, never cloying.
 Here, your earth-born souls still speak
 To mortals, of their little week ;
 Of their sorrows and delights ;
 Of their passions and their spites ;
 Of their glory and their shame ;
 What doth strengthen and what maim.
 Thus ye teach us, every day,
 Wisdom, though fled far away.

Bards of Passion and of Mirth,
 Ye have left your souls on earth !
 Ye have souls in heaven too,
 Double-liv'd in regions new !

LINES ON THE MERMAID TAVERN.

Souls of poets dead and gone,
What Elysium have ye known,
Happy field or mossy cavern,
Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern ?
Have ye tippled drink more fine
Than mine host's Canary wine ?
Or are fruits of Paradise
Sweeter than those dainty pies
Of venison ? O generous food !
Drest as though bold Robin Hood
Would, with his maid Marian,
Sup and bowse from horn and can.

I have heard that on a day
Mine host's sign-board flew away,
Nobody knew whither, till
An astrologer's old quill
To a sheepskin gave the story,
Said he saw you in your glory,
Underneath a new old-sign
Sipping beverage divine,
And pledging with contented smack
The Mermaid in the Zodiac.

Souls of Poets dead and gone,
What Elysium have ye known,
Happy field or mossy cavern,
Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern ?

FRAGMENT OF AN ODE TO MAIA.

MOTHER of Hermes! and still youthful Maia!
 May I sing to thee
As thou wast hymned on the shores of Baiæ?
 Or may I woo thee
In earlier Sicilian? or thy smiles
Seek as they once were sought, in Grecian isles,
By bards who died content on pleasant sward,
 Leaving great verse unto a little clan?
O, give me their old vigour, and unheard
 Save of the quiet Primrose, and the span
 Of heaven and few ears,
Rounded by thee, my song should die away
 Content as theirs,
Rich in the simple worship of a day.

BALLADS.

MEG MERRILIES.

OLD Meg she was a Gipsy,
And liv'd upon the Moors :
Her bed it was the brown heath turf,
And her house was out of doors.

Her apples were swart blackberries,
Her currants pods o' broom ;
Her wine was dew of the wild white rose,
Her book a churchyard tomb.

Her Brothers were the craggy hills,
Her Sisters larchen trees —
Alone with her great family
She liv'd as she did please.

No breakfast had she many a morn,
No dinner many a noon,
And 'stead of supper she would stare
Full hard against the Moon.

But every morn of woodbine fresh
She made her garlanding,
And every night the dark glen Yew
She wove, and she would sing.

And with her fingers old and brown
She plaited Mats o' Rushes,
And gave them to the Cottagers
She met among the Bushes.

Old Meg was brave as Margaret Queen
And tall as Amazon:
An old red blanket cloak she wore;
A chip hat had she on.
God rest her aged bones somewhere —
She died full long ago!

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI.

I.

O WHAT can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
Alone and palely loitering?
The sedge is wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing.

II.

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
So haggard and so woe-begone?
The squirrel's granary is full,
And the harvest's done.

III.

I see a lily on thy brow,
With anguish moist and fever dew;
And on thy cheek a fading rose
Fast withereth too.

IV.

I met a lady in the meads,
Full beautiful, a faery's child;

Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild.

V.

I set her on my pacing steed,
And nothing else saw all day long ;
For sideways would she lean, and sing
A faery's song.

VI.

I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone ;
She look'd at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan.

VII.

She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild, and manna dew ;
And sure in language strange she said,
I love thee true.

VIII.

She took me to her elfin grot,
And there she wept, and sigh'd full sore,
And there I shut her wild, wild eyes
With kisses four.

IX.

And there we slumber'd on the moss,
And there I dream'd, ah woe betide,
The latest dream I ever dream'd
On the cold hill side.

X.

I saw pale kings, and princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all ;

Who cry'd : — “ La belle Dame sans merci
Hath thee in thrall ! ”

XI.

I saw their starv'd lips in the gloam
With horrid warning gaped wide,
And I awoke, and found me here
On the cold hill side.

XII.

And this is why I sojourn here
Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing.

SONNETS.

ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER.

MUCH have I travell'd in the realms of gold,
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
That deep-brow'd Homer ruled as his demesne:
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken;
Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
He star'd at the Pacific — and all his men
Look'd at each other with a wild surmise —
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

TO HOMER.

STANDING aloof in giant ignorance,
Of thee I hear and of the Cyclades,
As one who sits ashore and longs perchance
To visit dolphin-coral in deep seas.
So thou wast blind; — but then the veil was rent,
For Jove uncurtain'd Heaven to let thee live,
And Neptune made for thee a spumy tent,
And Pan made sing for thee his forest-hive;
Aye on the shores of darkness there is light,
And precipices show untrodden green,
There is a budding morrow in midnight,
There is a triple sight in blindness keen;
Such seeing hadst thou, as it once befell
To Dian, Queen of Earth, and Heaven, and Hell.

TO ONE WHO HAS BEEN LONG IN CITY PENT.

To one who has been long in city pent,
'Tis very sweet to look into the fair
And open face of heaven, — to breathe a prayer
Full in the smile of the blue firmament.
Who is more happy, when, with heart's content,
Fatigued he sinks into some pleasant lair
Of wavy grass, and reads a debonair
And gentle tale of love and languishment?
Returning home at evening, with an ear
Catching the notes of Philomel, — an eye
Watching the sailing cloudlet's bright career,
He mourns that day so soon has glided by:
E'en like the passage of an angel's tear
That falls through the clear ether silently.

THE HUMAN SEASONS.

FOUR seasons fill the measure of the year;
There are four seasons in the mind of man:
He has his lusty Spring, when fancy clear
Takes in all beauty with an easy span:
He has his Summer, when luxuriously
Spring's honied end of youthful thought he loves
To ruminate, and by such dreaming high
Is nearest unto heaven: quiet coves
His soul has in its Autumn, when his wings
He furleth close; contented so to look
On mists in idleness — to let fair things
Pass by unheeded as a threshold brook.
He has his Winter too of pale misfeature,
Or else he would forego his mortal nature.

TO AILSA ROCK.

HEARKEN, thou craggy ocean pyramid!
 Give answer from thy voice, the sea-fowls' screams!
 When were thy shoulders mantled in huge streams?
 When, from the sun, was thy broad forehead hid?
 How long is't since the mighty power bid
 Thee heave to airy sleep from fathom dreams?
 Sleep in the lap of thunder or sunbeams,
 Or when gray clouds are thy cold coverlid.
 Thou answer'st not; for thou art dead asleep;
 Thy life is but two dead eternities —
 The last in air, the former in the deep;
 First with the whales, last with the eagle-skies —
 Drown'd wast thou till an earthquake made thee steep,
 Another cannot wake thy giant size.

WHEN I HAVE FEARS.

WHEN I have fears that I may cease to be
 Before my pen has glean'd my teeming brain,
 Before high piled books, in charactry,
 Hold like rich garnerers the full-ripen'd grain;
 When I behold, upon the night's starr'd face,
 Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,
 And think that I may never live to trace
 Their shadows, with the magic hand of chance;
 And when I feel, fair creature of an hour,
 That I shall never look upon thee more,
 Never have relish in the faery power
 Of unreflecting love; — then on the shore
 Of the wide world I stand alone, and think
 Till love and fame to nothingness do sink.

WHY DID I LAUGH TO-NIGHT?

WHY did I laugh to-night? No voice will tell:
 No God, no Demon of severe response,
 Deigns to reply from Heaven or from Hell.
 Then to my human heart I turn at once.
 Heart! Thou and I are here sad and alone;
 I say, why did I laugh? O mortal pain!
 O Darkness! Darkness! ever must I moan,
 To question Heaven and Hell and Heart in vain.
 Why did I laugh? I know this Being's lease,
 My fancy to its utmost blisses spreads;
 Yet would I on this very midnight cease,
 And the world's gaudy ensigns see in shreds;
 Verse, Fame, and Beauty are intense indeed,
 But Death intenser — Death is Life's high meed.

A DRÉAM, AFTER READING DANTE'S EPISODE
OF PAULO AND FRANCESCA.

As Hermes once took to his feathers light,
 When lulled Argus, baffled, swoon'd and slept,
 So on a Delphic reed, my idle spright
 So play'd, so charm'd, so conquer'd, so bereft
 The dragon-world of all its hundred eyes;
 And, seeing it asleep, so fled away —
 Not to pure Ida with its snow-cold skies,
 Nor unto Tempe where Jove griev'd a day;
 But to that second circle of sad hell,
 Where 'mid the gust, the whirlwind, and the flaw
 Of rain and hail-stones, lovers need not tell
 Their sorrows. Pale were the sweet lips I saw,
 Pale were the lips I kiss'd, and fair the form
 I floated with, about that melancholy storm.

ON THE SEA.

It keeps eternal whisperings around
Desolate shores, and with its mighty swell
Gluts twice ten thousand caverns, till the spell
Of Hecate leaves them their old shadowy sound.
Often 'tis in such gentle temper found,
That scarcely will the very smallest shell
Be mov'd for days from where it sometime fell,
When last the winds of heaven were unbound.
Oh ye! who have your eyeballs vex'd and tir'd,
Feast them upon the wideness of the Sea;
Oh ye! whose ears are dinn'd with uproar rude,
Or fed too much with cloying melody, —
Sit ye near some old cavern's mouth, and brood
Until ye start, as if the sea-nymphs quir'd!

BRIGHT STAR.

BRIGHT star, would I were stedfast as thou art —
Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night,
And watching, with eternal lids apart,
Like nature's patient, sleepless Eremite,
The moving waters at their priestlike task
Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,
Or gazing on the new soft-fallen mask
Of snow upon the mountains and the moors —
No — yet still stedfast, still unchangeable,
Pillow'd upon my fair love's ripening breast,
To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,
Awake for ever in a sweet unrest,
Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,
And so live ever — or else swoon to death.

SONG.

SHED NO TEAR!

SHED no tear — O shed no tear !
The flower will bloom another year.
Weep no more — O weep no more !
Young buds sleep in the root's white core.
Dry your eyes — O dry your eyes,
For I was taught in Paradise
To ease my breast of melodies —
Shed no tear.

Overhead — look overhead
'Mong the blossoms white and red —
Look up, look up — I flutter now
On this flush pomegranate bough —
See me — 'tis this silvery bill
Ever cures the good man's ill —

Shed no tear — O shed no tear !
The flower will bloom another year.
Adieu — Adieu — I fly, adieu,
I vanish in the heaven's blue —
Adieu, Adieu !

HYPERION.

A FRAGMENT.

BOOK I.

DEEP in the shady sadness of a vale
Far sunken from the healthy breath of morn,
Far from the fiery noon, and eve's one star,
Sat gray-hair'd Saturn, quiet as a stone,
Still as the silence round about his lair;
Forest on forest hung about his head
Like cloud on cloud. No stir of air was there,
Not so much life as on a summer's day
Robs not one light seed from the feather'd grass,
But where the dead leaf fell, there did it rest.
A stream went voiceless by, still deadened more
By reason of his fallen divinity
Spreading a shade: the Naiad 'mid her reeds
Press'd her cold finger closer to her lips.

Along the margin-sand large foot-marks went,
No further than to where his feet had stray'd,
And slept there since. Upon the sodden ground
His old right hand lay nerveless, listless, dead,
Unsceptred; and his realmless eyes were closed;
While his bow'd head seem'd list'ning to the Earth,
His ancient mother, for some comfort yet.

It seem'd no force could wake him from his place:
But there came one, who with a kindred hand

Touch'd his wide shoulders, after bending low
With reverence, though to one who knew it not.
She was a Goddess of the infant world;
By her in stature the tall Amazon
Had stood a pigmy's height: she would have ta'en
Achilles by the hair and bent his neck;
Or with a finger stay'd Ixion's wheel.
Her face was large as that of Memphian sphinx,
Pedestal'd haply in a palace-court,
When sages look'd to Egypt for their lore.
But oh! how unlike marble was that face;
How beautiful, if sorrow had not made
Sorrow more beautiful than Beauty's self.
There was a listening fear in her regard,
As if calamity had but begun;
As if the vanward clouds of evil days
Had spent their malice, and the sullen rear
Was with its stored thunder labouring up.
One hand she press'd upon that aching spot
Where beats the human heart, as if just there,
Though an immortal, she felt cruel pain:
The other upon Saturn's bended neck
She laid, and to the level of his ear
Leaning with parted lips, some words she spake
In solemn tenour and deep organ tone:
Some mourning words, which in our feeble tongue
Would come in these like accents; O how frail
To that large utterance of the early Gods!
"Saturn, look up! — though wherefore, poor old King?
I have no comfort for thee, no not one:
I cannot say, 'O wherefore sleepest thou?'
For heaven is parted from thee, and the earth
Knows thee not, thus afflicted, for a God;
And ocean too, with all its solemn noise,
Has from thy sceptre pass'd; and all the air

Is emptied of thine hoary majesty.
Thy thunder, conscious of the new command,
Rumbles reluctant o'er our fallen house;
And thy sharp lightning in unpractis'd hands
Scorches and burns our once serene domain.
O aching time! O moments big as years!
All as ye pass swell out the monstrous truth,
And press it so upon our weary griefs
That unbelief has not a space to breathe.
Saturn, sleep on: — O thoughtless, why did I
Thus violate thy slumbrous solitude?
Why should I ope thy melancholy eyes?
Saturn, sleep on! while at thy feet I weep."

As when, upon a tranced summer-night,
Those green-rob'd senators of mighty woods,
Tall oaks, branch-charmed by the earnest stars,
Dream, and so dream all night without a stir,
Save from one gradual solitary gust
Which comes upon the silence, and dies off,
As if the ebbing air had but one wave;
So came these words and went; the while in tears
She touch'd her fair large forehead to the ground,
Just where her falling hair might be outspread
A soft and silken mat for Saturn's feet.
One moon, with alteration slow, had shed
Her silver seasons four upon the night,
And still these two were postured motionless,
Like natural sculpture in cathedral cavern;
The frozen God still couchant on the earth,
And the sad Goddess weeping at his feet:
Until at length old Saturn lifted up
His faded eyes, and saw his kingdom gone,
And all the gloom and sorrow of the place,
And that fair kneeling Goddess; and then spake,

As with a palsied tongue, and while his beard
Shook horrid with such aspen-malady :
“ O tender spouse of gold Hyperion,
Thea, I feel thee ere I see thy face ;
Look up, and let me see our doom in it ;
Look up, and tell me if this feeble shape
Is Saturn's ; tell me, if thou hear'st the voice
Of Saturn ; tell me, if this wrinkling brow,
Naked and bare of its great diadem,
Peers like the front of Saturn. Who had power
To make me desolate ? whence came the strength ?
How was it nurtur'd to such bursting forth,
While Fate seem'd strangled in my nervous grasp ?
But it is so ; and I am smother'd up,
And buried from all godlike exercise
Of influence benign on planets pale,
Of admonitions to the winds and seas,
Of peaceful sway above man's harvesting,
And all those acts which Deity supreme
Doth ease its heart of love in. — I am gone
Away from my own bosom : I have left
My strong identity, my real self,
Somewhere between the throne, and where I sit
Here on this spot of earth. Search, Thea, search !
Open thine eyes eterne, and sphere them round
Upon all space : space starr'd, and lorn of light ;
Space region'd with life-air ; and barren void ;
Spaces of fire, and all the yawn of hell. —
Search, Thea, search ! and tell me, if thou seest
A certain shape or shadow, making way
With wings or chariot fierce to repossess
A heaven he lost erewhile : it must — it must
Be of ripe progress — Saturn must be King.
Yes, there must be a golden victory ;
There must be Gods thrown down, and trumpets blown

Of triumph calm, and hymns of festival
Upon the gold clouds metropolitan,
Voices of soft proclaim, and silver stir
Of strings in hollow shells; and there shall be
Beautiful things made new, for the surprise
Of the sky-children; I will give command:
Thea! Thea! Thea! where is Saturn?"

This passion lifted him upon his feet,
And made his hands to struggle in the air,
His Druid locks to shake and ooze with sweat,
His eyes to fever out, his voice to cease.
He stood, and heard not Thea's sobbing deep;
A little time, and then again he snatch'd
Utterance thus: — "But cannot I create?
Cannot I form? Cannot I fashion forth
Another world, another universe,
To overbear and crumble this to nought?
Where is another chaos? Where?" — That word
Found way into Olympus, and made quake
The rebel three. — Thea was startled up,
And in her bearing was a sort of hope,
As thus she quick-voic'd spake, yet full of awe.

"This cheers our fallen house: come to our friends,
O Saturn! come away, and give them heart;
I know the covert, for thence came I hither."
Thus brief; then with beseeching eyes she went
With backward footing through the shade a space:
He follow'd, and she turn'd to lead the way
Through aged boughs, that yielded like the mist
Which eagles cleave upmounting from their nest.

Meanwhile in other realms big tears were shed,
More sorrow like to this, and such like woe,
Too huge for mortal tongue or pen of scribe:

The Titans fierce, self-hid, or prison-bound,
Groan'd for the old allegiance once more,
And listen'd in sharp pain for Saturn's voice.
But one of the whole mammoth-brood still kept
His sov'reignty, and rule, and majesty ; —
Blazing Hyperion on his orb'd fire
Still sat, still snuff'd the incense, teeming up
From man to the sun's God ; yet unsecure :
For as among us mortals omens drear
Fright and perplex, so also shuddered he —
Not at dog's howl, or gloom-bird's hated screech,
Or the familiar visiting of one
Upon the first toll of his passing-bell,
Or prophesyings of the midnight lamp ;
But horrors, portion'd to a giant nerve,
Oft made Hyperion ache. His palace bright
Bastion'd with pyramids of glowing gold,
And touch'd with shade of bronzed obelisks,
Glared a blood-red through all its thousand courts,
Arches, and domes, and fiery galleries ;
And all its curtains of Aurorian clouds
Flush'd angerly : while sometimes eagle's wings,
Unseen before by Gods or wondering men,
Darken'd the place ; and neighing steeds were heard,
Not heard before by Gods or wondering men.
Also, when he would taste the spicy wreaths
Of incense, breath'd aloft from sacred hills,
Instead of sweets, his ample palate took
Savour of poisonous brass and metal sick :
And so, when harbour'd in the sleepy west,
After the full completion of fair day, —
For rest divine upon exalted couch
And slumber in the arms of melody,
He pac'd away the pleasant hours of ease
With stride colossal, on from hall to hall ;

While far within each aisle and deep recess,
His winged minions in close clusters stood,
Amaz'd and full of fear; like anxious men
Who on wide plains gather in panting troops,
When earthquakes jar their battlements and towers.
Even now, while Saturn, rous'd from icy trance,
Went step for step with Thea through the woods,
Hyperion, leaving twilight in the rear,
Came slope upon the threshold of the west;
Then, as was wont, his palace-door flew ope
In smoothest silence, save what solemn tubes,
Blown by the serious Zephyrs, gave of sweet
And wandering sounds, slow-breathed melodies;
And like a rose in vermeil tint and shape,
In fragrance soft, and coolness to the eye,
That inlet to severe magnificence
Stood full blown, for the God to enter in.

He enter'd, but he enter'd full of wrath;
His flaming robes stream'd out beyond his heels,
And gave a roar, as if of earthly fire,
That scar'd away the meek ethereal Hours
And made their dove-wings tremble. On he flared,
From stately nave to nave, from vault to vault,
Through bowers of fragrant and enwreathed light,
And diamond-paved lustrous long arcades,
Until he reach'd the great main cupola;
There standing fierce beneath, he stampt his foot,
And from the basements deep to the high towers
Jarr'd his own golden region; and before
The quavering thunder thereupon had ceas'd,
His voice leapt out, despite of godlike curb,
To this result: "O dreams of day and night!
O monstrous forms! O effigies of pain!
O spectres busy in a cold, cold gloom!

O lank-ear'd Phantoms of black-weeded pools !
Why do I know ye ? why have I seen ye ? why
Is my eternal essence thus distraught
To see and to behold these horrors new ?
Saturn is fallen, am I too to fall ?
Am I to leave this haven of my rest,
This cradle of my glory, this soft clime,
This calm luxuriance of blissful light,
These crystalline pavilions, and pure fanes
Of all my lucent empire ? It is left
Deserted, void, nor any haunt of mine.
The blaze, the splendour, and the symmetry,
I cannot see — but darkness, death and darkness.
Even here, into my centre of repose,
The shady visions come to domineer,
Insult, and blind, and stifle up my pomp. —
Fall ! — No, by Tellus and her briny robes !
Over the fiery frontier of my realms
I will advance a terrible right arm
Shall scare that infant thunderer, rebel Jove,
And bid old Saturn take his throne again." —
He spake, and ceas'd, the while a heavier threat
Held struggle with his throat but came not forth ;
For as in theatres of crowded men
Hubbub increases more they call out ' Hush ! '
So at Hyperion's words the Phantoms pale
Bestirr'd themselves, thrice horrible and cold ;
And from the mirror'd level where he stood
A mist arose, as from a scummy marsh.
At this, through all his bulk an agony
Crept gradual, from the feet unto the crown,
Like a lithe serpent vast and muscular
Making slow way, with head and neck convuls'd
From over-strained might. Releas'd, he fled
To the eastern gates, and full six dewy hours

Before the dawn in season due should blush,
He breath'd fierce breath against the sleepy portals,
Clear'd them of heavy vapours, burst them wide
Suddenly on the ocean's chilly streams.
The planet orb of fire, whereon he rode
Each day from east to west the heavens through,
Spun round in sable curtaining of clouds ;
Not therefore veiled quite, blindfold, and hid,
But ever and anon the glancing spheres,
Circles, and arcs, and broad-belting colure,
Glow'd through, and wrought upon the muffling dark
Sweet-shaped lightnings from the nadir deep
Up to the zenith, — hieroglyphics old,
Which sages and keen-ey'd astrologers
Then living on the earth, with labouring thought
Won from the gaze of many centuries :
Now lost, save what we find on remnants huge
Of stone, or marble swart ; their import gone,
Their wisdom long since fled. — Two wings this orb
Possess'd for glory, two fair argent wings,
Ever exalted at the God's approach :
And now, from forth the gloom their plumes immense
Rose, one by one, till all outspreaded were ;
While still the dazzling globe maintain'd eclipse,
Awaiting for Hyperion's command.
Fain would he have commanded, fain took throne
And bid the day begin, if but for change.
He might not : — No, though a primeval God :
The sacred seasons might not be disturb'd.
Therefore the operations of the dawn
Stay'd in their birth, even as here 'tis told.
Those silver wings expanded sisterly,
Eager to sail their orb ; the porches wide
Open'd upon the dusk demesnes of night ;
And the bright Titan, phrenzied with new woes,

Unus'd to bend, by hard compulsion bent
His spirit to the sorrow of the time;
And all along a dismal rack of clouds,
Upon the boundaries of day and night,
He stretch'd himself in grief and radiance faint.
There as he lay, the Heaven with its stars
Look'd down on him with pity, and the voice
Of Cœlus, from the universal space,
Thus whisper'd low and solemn in his ear.
"O brightest of my children dear, earth-born
And sky-engendered, Son of Mysteries
All unrevealed even to the powers
Which met at thy creating; at whose joys
And palpitations sweet, and pleasures soft,
I, Cœlus, wonder, how they came and whence;
And at the fruits thereof what shapes they be,
Distinct, and visible; symbols divine,
Manifestations of that beauteous life
Diffus'd unseen throughout eternal space:
Of these new-form'd art thou, oh brightest child!
Of these, thy brethren and the Goddesses!
There is sad feud among ye, and rebellion
Of son against his sire. I saw him fall,
I saw my first-born tumbled from his throne!
To me his arms were spread, to me his voice
Found way from forth the thunders round his head!
Pale wox I, and in vapours hid my face.
Art thou, too, near such doom? vague fear there is:
For I have seen my sons most unlike Gods.
Divine ye were created, and divine
In sad demeanour, solemn, undisturb'd,
Unruffl'd, like high Gods, ye liv'd and ruled:
Now I behold in you fear, hope, and wrath;
Actions of rage and passion; even as
I see them, on the mortal world beneath,

In men who die. — This is the grief, O Son!
Sad sign of ruin, sudden dismay, and fall!
Yet do thou strive; as thou art capable,
As thou canst move about, an evident God;
And canst oppose to each malignant hour
Ethereal presence: — I am but a voice;
My life is but the life of winds and tides,
No more than winds and tides can I avail: —
But thou canst. — Be thou therefore in the van
Of circumstance; yea, seize the arrow's barb
Before the tense string murmur. — To the earth!
For there thou wilt find Saturn, and his woes.
Meantime I will keep watch on thy bright sun,
And of thy seasons be a careful nurse." —
Ere half this region-whisper had come down,
Hyperion arose, and on the stars
Lifted his curved lids, and kept them wide
Until it ceas'd; and still he kept them wide:
And still they were the same bright, patient stars.
Then with a slow incline of his broad breast,
Like to a diver in the pearly seas,*
Forward he stoop'd over the airy shore,
And plung'd all noiseless into the deep night.

BOOK II.

Just at the self-same beat of Time's wide wings
Hyperion slid into the rustled air,
And Saturn gain'd with Thea that sad place
Where Cybele and the bruised Titans mourn'd.
It was a den where no insulting light
Could glimmer on their tears; where their own groans
They felt, but heard not, for the solid roar
Of thunderous waterfalls and torrents hoarse,
Pouring a constant bulk, uncertain where.

Crag jutting forth to crag, and rocks that seem'd
Ever as if just rising from a sleep,
Forehead to forehead held their monstrous horns;
And thus in thousand hugest phantasies
Made a fit roofing to this nest of woe.
Instead of thrones, hard flint they sat upon,
Couches of rugged stone, and slaty ridge
Stubborn'd with iron. All were not assembled:
Some chain'd in torture, and some wandering.
Cœus, and Gyges, and Briareüs,
Typhon, and Dolor, and Porphyryon,
With many more, the brawniest in assault,
Were pent in regions of laborious breath;
Dungeon'd in opaque element, to keep
Their clenched teeth still clench'd, and all their limbs
Lock'd up like veins of metal, cramp't and screw'd;
Without a motion, save of their big hearts
Heaving in pain, and horribly convuls'd
With sanguine feverous boiling gurge of pulse.
Mnemosyne was straying in the world;
Far from her moon had Phœbe wandered;
And many else were free to roam abroad,
But for the main, here found they covert drear.
Scarce images of life, one here, one there,
Lay vast and edgeways; like a dismal cirque
Of Druid stones, upon a forlorn moor,
When the chill rain begins at shut of eve,
In dull November, and their chancel vault,
The Heaven itself, is blinded throughout night.
Each one kept shroud, nor to his neighbour gave
Or word, or look, or action of despair.
Creüs was one; his ponderous iron mace
Lay by him, and a shatter'd rib of rock
Told of his rage, ere he thus sank and pined.
Iäpetus another; in his grasp,

A serpent's plashy neck ; its barbed tongue
Squeez'd from the gorge, and all its uncurl'd length
Dead ; and because the creature could not spit
Its poison in the eyes of conquering Jove.
Next Cottus : prone he lay, chin uppermost,
As though in pain ; for still upon the flint
He ground severe his skull, with open mouth
And eyes at horrid working. Nearest him
Asia, born of most enormous Caf,
Who cost her mother Tellus keener pangs,
Though feminine, than any of her sons :
More thought than woe was in her dusky face,
For she was prophesying of her glory ;
And in her wide imagination stood
Palm-shaded temples, and high rival fanes,
By Oxus or in Ganges' sacred isles.
Even as hope upon her anchor leans,
So leant she, not so fair, upon a tusk
Shed from the broadest of her elephants.
Above her, on a crag's uneasy shelf,
Upon his elbow rais'd, all prostrate else,
Shadow'd Enceladus ; once tame and mild
As grazing ox unworried in the meads ;
Now tiger-passion'd, lion-thoughted, wroth,
He meditated, plotted, and even now
Was hurling mountains in that second war,
Not long delay'd, that scared the younger Gods
To hide themselves in forms of beast and bird.
Not far hence Atlas ; and beside him prone
Phorcus, the sire of Gorgons. Neighbour'd close
Oceanus, and Tethys, in whose lap
Sobb'd Clymene among her tangled hair.
In midst of all lay Themis, at the feet
Of Ops the queen all clouded round from sight ;
No shape distinguishable, more than when

Thick night confounds the pine-tops with the clouds :
And many else whose names may not be told.
For when the Muse's wings are air-ward spread,
Who shall delay her flight ? And she must chaunt
Of Saturn, and his guide, who now had climb'd
With damp and slippery footing from a depth
More horrid still. Above a sombre cliff
Their heads appear'd, and up their stature grew
Till on the level height their steps found ease :
Then Thea spread abroad her trembling arms
Upon the precincts of this nest of pain,
And sidelong fix'd her eye on Saturn's face :
There saw she direst strife ; the supreme God
At war with all the frailty of grief,
Of rage, of fear, anxiety, revenge,
Remorse, spleen, hope, but most of all despair.
Against these plagues he strove in vain : for Fate
Had pour'd a mortal oil upon his head,
A disanointing poison : so that Thea,
Affrighted, kept her still, and let him pass
First onwards in, among the fallen tribe.

As with us mortal men, the laden heart
Is persecuted more, and fever'd more,
When it is nighing to the mournful house
Where other hearts are sick of the same bruise ;
So Saturn, as he walk'd into the midst,
Felt faint, and would have sunk among the rest,
But that he met Ençeladus's eye,
Whose mightiness, and awe of him, at once
Came like an inspiration ; and he shouted,
"Titans, behold your God !" at which some groan'd ;
Some started on their feet ; some also shouted ;
Some wept, some wail'd, all bow'd with reverence ;
And Ops, uplifting her black folded veil,

Show'd her pale cheeks, and all her forehead wan,
Her eyebrows thin and jet, and hollow eyes.
There is a roaring in the bleak-grown pines
When Winter lifts his voice; there is a noise
Among immortals when a God gives sign,
With hushing finger, how he means to load
His tongue with the full weight of utterless thought,
With thunder, and with music, and with pomp:
Such noise is like the roar of bleak-grown pines;
Which, when it ceases in this mountain'd world,
No other sound succeeds; but ceasing here,
Among these fallen, Saturn's voice therefrom
Grew up like organ, that begins anew
Its strain, when other harmonies, stopt short,
Leave the dinn'd air vibrating silverly.
Thus grew it up — "Not in my own sad breast,
Which is its own great judge and searcher out,
Can I find reason why ye should be thus:
Not in the legends of the first of days,
Studied from that old spirit-leaved book
Which starry Uranus with finger bright
Saved from the shores of darkness, when the waves
Low-ebb'd still hid it up in shallow gloom; —
And the which book ye know I ever kept
For my firm-based footstool: — Ah, infirm!
Not there, nor in sign, symbol, or portent
Of element, earth, water, air, and fire, —
At war, at peace, or inter-quarreling
One against one, or two, or three, or all
Each several one against the other three,
As fire with air loud warring when rainfloods
Drown both, and press them both against earth's face,
Where, finding sulphur, a quadruple wrath
Unhinges the poor world; — not in that strife,
Wherefrom I take strange lore, and read it deep,

Can I find reason why ye should be thus :
No, nowhere can unriddle, though I search,
And pore on Nature's universal scroll
Even to swooning, why ye, Divinities,
The first-born of all shap'd and palpable Gods,
Should cower beneath what, in comparison,
Is untremendous might. Yet ye are here,
O'erwhelm'd, and spurn'd, and batter'd, ye are here !
O Titans, shall I say ' Arise ! ' — Ye groan :
Shall I say ' Crouch ! ' — Ye groan. What can I then ?
O Heaven wide ! O unseen parent dear !
What can I ? Tell me, all ye brethren Gods,
How we can war, how engine our great wrath !
O speak your counsel now, for Saturn's ear
Is all a-hunger'd. Thou, Oceanus,
Ponderest high and deep ; and in thy face
I see, astonied, that severe content
Which comes of thought and musing : give us help ! ”

So ended Saturn ; and the God of the Sea,
Sophist and sage, from no Athenian grove,
But cogitation in his watery shades,
Arose, with locks not oozy, and began,
In murmurs, which his first-endeavouring tongue
Caught infant-like from the far-foamed sands.
“ O ye, whom wrath consumes ! who, passion-stung,
Writhe at defeat, and nurse your agonies !
Shut up your senses, stifle up your ears,
My voice is not a bellows unto ire.
Yet listen, ye who will, whilst I bring proof
How ye, perforce, must be content to stoop :
And in the proof much comfort will I give,
If ye will take that comfort in its truth.
We fall by course of Nature's law, not force
Of thunder, or of Jove. Great Saturn, thou

Hast sifted well the atom-universe ;
But for this reason, that thou art the King,
And only blind from sheer supremacy,
One avenue was shaded from thine eyes,
Through which I wandered to eternal truth.
And first, as thou wast not the first of powers,
So art thou not the last ; it cannot be :
Thou art not the beginning nor the end.
From chaos and parental darkness came
Light, the first fruits of that intestine broil,
That sullen ferment, which for wondrous ends
Was ripening in itself. The ripe hour came,
And with it light, and light, engendering
Upon its own producer, forthwith touch'd
The whole enormous matter into life.
Upon that very hour, our parentage,
The Heavens and the Earth, were manifest :
Then thou first-born, and we the giant-race,
Found ourselves ruling new and beauteous realms.
Now comes the pain of truth, to whom 'tis pain ;
O folly ! for to bear all naked truths,
And to envisage circumstance, all calm,
That is the top of sovereignty. Mark well !
As Heaven and Earth are fairer, fairer far
Than Chaos and blank Darkness, though once chiefs ;
And as we show beyond that Heaven and Earth
In form and shape compact and beautiful,
In will, in action free, companionship,
And thousand other signs of purer life ;
So on our heels a fresh perfection treads,
A power more strong in beauty, born of us
And fated to excel us, as we pass
In glory that old Darkness : nor are we
Thereby more conquer'd, than by us the rule
Of shapeless Chaos. Say, doth the dull soil

Quarrel with the proud forests it hath fed,
And feedeth still, more comely than itself ?
Can it deny the chieftdom of green groves ?
Or shall the tree be envious of the dove
Because it cooeth, and hath snowy wings
To wander wherewithal and find its joys ?
We are such forest-trees, and our fair boughs
Have bred forth, not pale solitary doves,
But eagles golden-feather'd, who do tower
Above us in their beauty, and must reign
In right thereof ; for 'tis the eternal law
That first in beauty should be first in might :
Yea, by that law, another race may drive
Our conquerors to mourn as we do now.
Have ye beheld the young God of the Seas,
My dispossessor ? Have ye seen his face ?
Have ye beheld his chariot, foam'd along
By noble winged creatures he hath made ?
I saw him on the calmed waters scud,
With such a glow of beauty in his eyes,
That it enforc'd me to bid sad farewell
To all my empire : farewell sad I took,
And hither came, to see how dolorous fate
Had wrought upon ye ; and how I might best
Give consolation in this woe extreme.
Receive the truth, and let it be your balm."

Whether through poz'd conviction, or disdain,
They guarded silence, when Oceanus
Left murmuring, what deepest thought can tell ?
But so it was, none answer'd for a space,
Save one whom none regarded, Clymene ;
And yet she answer'd not, only complain'd,
With hectic lips, and eyes up-looking mild,
Thus wording timidly among the fierce :

“O Father, I am here the simplest voice,
And all my knowledge is that joy is gone,
And this thing woe crept in among our hearts,
There to remain for ever, as I fear:
I would not bode of evil, if I thought
So weak a creature could turn off the help
Which by just right should come of mighty Gods;
Yet let me tell my sorrow, let me tell
Of what I heard, and how it made me weep,
And know that we had parted from all hope.
I stood upon a shore, a pleasant shore,
Where a sweet clime was breathed from a land
Of fragrance, quietness, and trees, and flowers.
Full of calm joy it was, as I of grief;
Too full of joy and soft delicious warmth.
So that I felt a movement in my heart
To chide, and to reproach that solitude
With songs of misery, music of our woes;
And sat me down, and took a mouthed shell
And murmur'd into it, and made melody —
O melody no more! for while I sang,
And with poor skill let pass into the breeze
The dull shell's echo, from a bowery strand
Just opposite, an island of the sea,
There came enchantment with the shifting wind,
That did both drown and keep alive my ears.
I threw my shell away upon the sand,
And a wave fill'd it, as my sense was fill'd
With that new blissful golden melody.
A living death was in each gush of sounds,
Each family of rapturous hurried notes,
That fell, one after one, yet all at once,
Like pearl beads dropping sudden from their string:
And then another, then another strain,
Each like a dove leaving its olive perch,

With music wing'd instead of silent plumes,
To hover round my head, and make me sick
Of joy and grief at once. Grief overcame,
And I was stopping up my frantic ears,
When, past all hindrance of my trembling hands,
A voice came sweeter, sweeter than all tune,
And still it cry'd, 'Apollo! young Apollo!
The morning-bright Apollo! young Apollo!'
I fled, it follow'd me, and cry'd, 'Apollo!'
O Father, and O Brethren, had ye felt
Those pains of mine; O Saturn, hadst thou felt,
Ye would not call this too indulged tongue
Presumptuous, in thus venturing to be heard."

So far her voice flow'd on, like timorous brook
That, lingering along a pebbled coast,
Doth fear to meet the sea: but sea it met,
And shudder'd; for the overwhelming voice
Of huge Enceladus swallow'd it in wrath:
The ponderous syllables, like sullen waves
In the half-glutted hollows of reef-rocks,
Came booming thus, while still upon his arm
He lean'd; not rising, from supreme contempt.
"Or shall we listen to the over-wise,
Or to the over-foolish giant, Gods?
Not thunderbolt on thunderbolt, till all
That rebel Jove's whole armoury were spent,
Not world on world upon these shoulders piled,
Could agonize me more than baby-words
In midst of this dethronement horrible.
Speak! roar! shout! yell! ye sleepy Titans all.
Do ye forget the blows, the buffets vile?
Are ye not smitten by a youngling arm?
Dost thou forget, sham Monarch of the Waves,
Thy scalding in the seas? What! have I rous'd

Your spleens with so few simple words as these ?
O joy ! for now I see ye are not lost :
O joy ! for now I see a thousand eyes
Wide-glaring for revenge ! ” — As this he said,
He lifted up his stature vast, and stood,
Still without intermission speaking thus :
“ Now ye are flames, I’ll tell you how to burn,
And purge the ether of our enemies ;
How to feed fierce the crooked stings of fire,
And singe away the swollen clouds of Jove,
Stifling that puny essence in its tent.
O let him feel the evil he hath done ;
For though I scorn Oceanus’s lore,
Much pain have I for more than loss of realms :
The days of peace and slumberous calm are fled ;
Those days, all innocent of scathing war,
When all the fair Existences of heaven
Came open-eyed to guess what we would speak : —
That was before our brows were taught to frown,
Before our lips knew else but solemn sounds ;
That was before we knew the winged thing,
Victory, might be lost, or might be won.
And be ye mindful that Hyperion,
Our brightest brother, still is undisgraced —
Hyperion, lo ! his radiance is here ! ”

All eyes were on Enceladus’s face,
And they beheld, while still Hyperion’s name
Flew from his lips up to the vaulted rocks,
A pallid gleam across his features stern :
Not savage, for he saw full many a God
Wroth as himself. He look’d upon them all,
And in each face he saw a gleam of light,
But splendider in Saturn’s, whose hoar locks
Shone like the bubbling foam about a keel

When the prow sweeps into a midnight cove.
In pale and silver silence they remain'd,
Till suddenly a splendour, like the morn,
Pervaded all the beetling gloomy steeps,
All the sad spaces of oblivion,
And every gulf, and every chasm old,
And every height, and every sullen depth,
Voiceless, or hoarse with loud tormented streams :
And all the everlasting cataracts,
And all the headlong torrents far and near,
Mantled before in darkness and huge shade
Now saw the light and made it terrible.
It was Hyperion : — a granite peak
His bright feet touch'd, and there he stay'd to view
The misery his brilliance had betray'd
To the most hateful seeing of itself.
• Golden his hair of short Numidian curl,
Regal his shape majestic, a vast shade
In midst of his own brightness, like the bulk
Of Memnon's image at the set of sun
To one who travels from the dusking East :
Sighs, too, as mournful as that Memnon's harp,
He utter'd, while his hands contemplative
He press'd together, and in silence stood.
Despondence seiz'd again the fallen Gods
At sight of the dejected King of Day,
And many hid their faces from the light :
But fierce Enceladus sent forth his eyes
Among the brotherhood ; and, at their glare,
Uprose Iäpetus, and Creüs too,
And Phorcus, sea-born, and together strode
To where he tower'd on his eminence.
There those four shouted forth old Saturn's name ;
Hyperion from the peak loud answer'd " Saturn ! "
Saturn sat near the Mother of the Gods,

In whose face was no joy, though all the Gods
Gave from their hollow throats the name of "Saturn!"

BOOK III.

Thus in alternate uproar and sad peace,
Amazed were those Titans utterly.
O leave them, Muse! O leave them to their woes;
For thou art weak to sing such tumults dire:
A solitary sorrow best befits
Thy lips, and antheming a lonely grief.
Leave them, O Muse! for thou anon wilt find
Many a fallen old Divinity
Wandering in vain about bewildered shores.
Meantime touch piously the Delphic harp,
And not a wind of heaven but will breathe
In aid soft warble from the Dorian flute;
For lo! 'tis for the Father of all verse.
Flush every thing that hath a vermeil hue,
Let the rose glow intense and warm the air,
And let the clouds of even and of morn
Float in voluptuous fleeces o'er the hills;
Let the red wine within the goblet boil,
Cold as a bubbling well; let faint-lipp'd shells,
On sands, or in great deeps, vermilion turn
Through all their labyrinths; and let the maid
Blush keenly, as with some warm kiss surpris'd.
Chief isle of the embowered Cyclades,
Rejoice, O Delos, with thine olives green,
And poplars, and lawn-shading palms, and beech,
In which the Zephyr breathes the loudest song,
And hazels thick, dark-stemm'd beneath the shade:
Apollo is once more the golden theme!
Where was he, when the Giant of the Sun
Stood bright, amid the sorrow of his peers?

Together had he left his mother fair
And his twin-sister sleeping in their bower,
And in the morning twilight wandered forth
Beside the osiers of a rivulet,
Full ankle-deep in lilies of the vale.
The nightingale had ceas'd, and a few stars
Were lingering in the heavens, while the thrush
Began calm-throated. Throughout all the isle
There was no covert, no retired cave
Unhaunted by the murmurous noise of waves,
Though scarcely heard in many a green recess.
He listen'd, and he wept, and his bright tears
Went trickling down the golden bow he held.
Thus with half-shut suffused eyes he stood,
While from beneath some cumbrous boughs hard by
With solemn step an awful Goddess came,
And there was purport in her looks for him,
Which he with eager guess began to read
Perplex'd, the while melodiously he said :
"How cam'st thou over the unfooted sea?
Or hath that antique mien and robed form
Mov'd in these vales invisible till now?
Sure I have heard those vestments sweeping o'er
The fallen leaves, when I have sat alone
In cool mid-forest. Surely I have traced
The rustle of those ample skirts about
These grassy solitudes, and seen the flowers
Lift up their heads, as still the whisper pass'd.
Goddess! I have beheld those eyes before,
And their eternal calm, and all that face,
Or I have dream'd." — "Yes," said the supreme shape,
"Thou hast dream'd of me; and awaking up
Didst find a lyre all golden by thy side,
Whose strings touch'd by thy fingers, all the vast
Unwearied ear of the whole universe

Listen'd in pain and pleasure at the birth
Of such new tuneful wonder. Is't not strange
That thou shouldst weep, so gifted? Tell me, youth,
What sorrow thou canst feel; for I am sad
When thou dost shed a tear: explain thy griefs
To one who in this lonely isle hath been
The watcher of thy sleep and hours of life,
From the young day when first thy infant hand
Pluck'd witless the weak flowers, till thine arm
Could bend that bow heroic to all times.
Show thy heart's secret to an ancient Power
Who hath forsaken old and sacred thrones
For prophecies of thee, and for the sake
Of loveliness new-born." — Apollo then,
With sudden scrutiny and gloomless eyes,
Thus answer'd, while his white melodious throat
Throbb'd with the syllables: — "Mnemosyne!
Thy name is on my tongue, I know not how;
Why should I tell thee what thou so well seest?
Why should I strive to show what from thy lips
Would come no mystery? For me, dark, dark,
And painful vile oblivion seals my eyes:
I strive to search wherefore I am so sad,
Until a melancholy numbs my limbs;
And then upon the grass I sit, and moan,
Like one who once had wings. — O why should I
Feel curs'd and thwarted, when the liegeless air
Yields to my step aspirant? why should I
Spurn the green turf as hateful to my feet?
Goddess benign, point forth some unknown thing
Are there not other regions than this isle?
What are the stars? There is the sun, the sun!
And the most patient brilliance of the moon!
And stars by thousands! Point me out the way
To any one particular beauteous star,
And I will flit into it with my lyre,

And make its silvery splendour pant with bliss.
I have heard the cloudy thunder : Where is power ?
Whose hand, whose essence, what divinity
Makes this alarum in the elements,
While I here idle listen on the shores
In fearless yet in aching ignorance ?
O tell me, lonely Goddess, by thy harp,
That waileth every morn and eventide,
Tell me why thus I rave, about these groves !
Mute thou remainest — Mute ! yet I can read
A wondrous lesson in thy silent face :
Knowledge enormous makes a God of me.
Names, deeds, gray legends, dire events, rebellions,
Majesties, sovran voices, agonies,
Creations and destroyings, all at once
Pour into the wide hollows of my brain,
And deify me, as if some blithe wine
Or bright elixir peerless I had drunk,
And so become immortal.” — Thus the God,
While his enkindled eyes, with level glance
Beneath his soft white temples, stedfast kept
Trembling with light upon Mnemosyne.
Soon wild commotions shook him, and made flush
All the immortal fairness of his limbs ;
Most like the struggle at the gate of death ;
Or liker still to one who should take leave
Of pale immortal death, and with a pang
As hot as death’s is chill, with fierce convulse
Die into life : so young Apollo anguish’d :
His very hair, his golden tresses famed
Kept undulation round his eager neck.
During the pain Mnemosyne upheld
Her arms as one who prophesied. — At length
Apollo shriek’d ; — and lo ! from all his limbs
Celestial . . .

*

*

*

*

*

*

NOTES.

THE EVE OF ST. AGNES.

THIS poem, first written at Chichester early in 1819, received its final revision at Winchester the following September. See *Introduction*, page 22, and also note on "Hyperion," p. 155.

The story of St. Agnes is told in many a "legion-leaved book." There are several saints of the name. The latest is a French visionary, St. Agnes of Jesus (1602-1634) whom both Christ and Mary visited, asking her to pray for Monsieur Olier, abbot of Pibrac. She once floated across his oratory, a chaplet in one hand and a crucifix in the other, with her guardian angel bearing her handkerchief and holding up the end of her mantle. More famous is St. Agnes of Monte Pulciano (1274-1317), especially venerated in her native Tuscany. She was placed in a nunnery at Procino, of the Dominican order. She slept on the ground with a stone for a pillow and lived, for fifteen years, on an unvarying diet of bread and water. She had miraculous gifts, multiplying loaves and turning water into wine, and received signal marks of divine favor. She was sometimes lifted five feet from the ground in her ecstasies of prayer. Christ sent her in midwinter a rose from the gardens of Paradise, and once the Madonna visited her and put into her arms the Holy Child, who gave her a pearl-studded crucifix from his own neck. At last the people of Monte Pulciano, longing for the blessing of her presence, built her a numery there, of which she was abbess until her death. It would seem to be this St. Agnes, of convent associations, who is the subject of Tennyson's lyric. The St. Agnes of Keats's poem is one of the four great virgin martyrs of the Latin church. The others are St. Cecilia, patroness of musicians, whose legend Chaucer told through the mouth of the "second nun" in the Canterbury pilgrimage; St. Lucia, patroness of the poor and guardian of the eyesight, a saint especially beloved in Spain; and St. Agatha of Sicily, protector against fire. The worship of St. Agnes, patroness of purity, is of wide extent. The Greek church celebrates three days in her honor. St. Ambrose wrote her "Acts," which are further commemorated in a hymn by Prudentius. Her legend runs as follows:—

The Son of Sempronius, the Roman governor, once beheld, while riding through the city streets, a beautiful maiden. She was scarcely more than a child, only thirteen years of age, but her innocent dignity and decorum were such that the patrician youth, deeply enamoured, sought her hand in marriage. But she replied : " Already am I pledged in faithful vows to another bridegroom, whose betrothal ring I wear. Him the angels serve. His beauty sun and moon adore. His alone I am and His alone will be."

The governor's son, so repulsed, rushed back to his father's house and, in his jealousy and longing, fell straightway into a burning fever, crying continually to his father, " Give me Agnes for my wife, or else I die." Then Sempronius bowed his pride for the love of his son and was driven in state to the humble home of the maiden, where he besought her even with tears, but still in vain. And when he asked of those who dwelt near by what mighty lord it was that could be preferred to the son of a Roman prefect, they told him that the bridegroom was no mortal man, but the new god out of Galilee, Jesus Christ. Then was Sempronius glad at heart, for Diocletian's edict had gone forth for the persecution of the Christians. So the governor laid a snare for the maiden, and, summoning her to his presence, bade her enter the service of Vesta. And Agnes answered, as he had foreseen, that Vesta and all the Roman deities were but vain images of stone. At this he assailed her with threats, and finally, as the child was unmoved in her constancy and would neither wed his son nor worship his gods, his rage waxed hot against her. He gave her over to Aspasius, his lieutenant, who commanded the soldiers to drag her naked through the streets, but instantly her golden hair grew so long and thick that it fell like a veil about her and hid her slender form from every eye. And when the soldiers thrust her into a chamber where the son of Sempronius should have her at his mercy, an angel brought her a robe of dazzling white, and when the youth approached, smote him, blinded and convulsed, to the ground. But in her pity and forgiveness, Agnes prayed for his recovery, and the young man was restored, with no mark of the celestial stroke upon him, to his father's arms. Then would Sempronius have saved the maiden, but the people who had witnessed this miracle cried out upon her for a sorceress. And since she joyfully avowed herself a Christian, a great fire was kindled and she was hurled into the midst of the flames. But the fire, leaving her untouched, leapt upon those standing by who had clamored against her and consumed them, while her song of praise arose from within the circle of fagots : —

“The furnace grows cold about me, the flame is divided asunder, and its heat is rolled back on them that quickened it. Lo! what I have believed, that now I see; what I have hoped for, that now I grasp; Whom I have desired, Him do I now embrace.”

Then did Aspasius seize a sword to drive it into her throat and stop that song. Yet he paused and bade the executioner bind her, as was the custom. A large heap of manacles was turned over before a pair could be found small enough to fit her girlish wrists, and then, with a smile, she lightly shook her hands, and the irons fell clattering to the pavement. While all stood amazed, she meekly knelt before Aspasius, like a white lily, and herself drew aside her golden hair, baring her neck to his sword, which slaughtered her.

Her parents and other Christians followed her body with tears and yet with triumph to a tomb beyond the city walls. There, eight days after her death, she appeared to them in glory, encompassed by a band of angelic virgins. Her robe of shining gold was studded with precious stones, a coronet of pearls was on her head, and in her arms she bore a lamb whiter than driven snow. She bent above her mother and said, “Weep not for me, dear mother, but rejoice that I reign with Christ in paradise.” And with these words she vanished from their sight.

The feast of St. Agnes falls on the 21st of January. The German Naogeorgus, in his scornful account of “The Popish Kingdom,” 1553, thus describes its observance at that time:—

“Then commes in place St. Agnes’ Day, which here in Germanie
Is not so much esteemde nor kept with such solemnitie;
But in the Popish Court it standes in passing hie degree,
As spring and head of wondrous gaine, and great commoditee.
For in St. Agnes’ church upon this day while masse they sing,
Two lambes as white as snowe the Nonnes do yearely use to bring.
And when the Agnus chaunted is, upon the aultar hie,
(For in this thing there hidden is a solemne mysterie)
They offer them. The servaunts of the Pope, when this is done,
Do put them into pasture good till shearing time be come.
Then other wooll they mingle with these holy fleeces twaine,
Wherof, being sponne and drest, are made the Pals of passing gaine.”

In 1793, an Englishman, Jephson, in a versified letter dated from Rome, where two churches are dedicated to St. Agnes, one outside the walls on the supposed site of her martyrdom, speaks of this offering of lambs, — whose Latin name, *agnus*, suggests a connection with Agnes, — at her shrine:—

“ Where each pretty *Ba*-lamb most gaily appears,
 With ribands stuck round on its tail and its ears ;
 On gold-fringed cushions they're stretched out to eat,
 And piously *ba*, and to church music bleat ;
 Yet to me they seem'd crying — alack and alas !
 What's all this white damask to daisies and grass ! ”

Professor Sophie Jewett, of Wellesley College, attended the service of St. Agnes' Day, 1902, and gave in an informal letter the following account :—

“ St. Agnes' Night. The owl wouldn't need his feathers here, to-day nor last night. We rose early and went out to the *Basilica di S. Agnese fuori della mura* to be sure of seeing your lambs. There was a vast crowd, mostly foreigners, and a long mass, but at the end two tiny woolly lambs were brought in, each in a basket, and I have faith to believe that they were blessed by the priest at the high altar. The reason why I did not *see* this part of it is that our fellow Anglo-Saxons, English and American, scrambled up and stood on the chairs. It was a disgraceful performance, which, I am told, occurs every year. However, when the scramble was over, our good manners were rewarded, for the whole priestly procession came down the nave so close to us that we had scarcely standing room. Each lambkin was carried by a sacristan, who had hard work to keep the more youthful members of the crowd from patting, tweaking, or even seizing the little creatures. They wore pink crowns—paper?—and had red rosettes tied into their wool here and there. I am told that they are drugged to induce good behavior, but Miss Calkins declares that one bleated during mass. (I think it was a baby.) After the ceremony, the lambs, as you know, are bred up by nuns until Easter, when they are slain. They are sent to the Pope for his Easter dinner, but their wool is woven into stuff from which the Papal pallium is made.”

But it is January 20 with which Keats's poem has to do. On this eve of the maiden saint's festival, girls were wont to practise all manner of divinations with a view to seeing their future husbands in a dream. (Chambers' “Book of Days”; Brand's “Popular Antiquities.”) A maiden “might take a row of pins and, plucking them out one after another, stick them in her sleeve, singing the whilst a paternoster ; and thus insure that her dreams would that night present the person in question. Or, passing into a different county from that of her ordinary residence, and taking her right-leg stocking, she might knit the left garter round it, repeating :—

“ ‘ I knit this knot, this knot I knit,
 To know the thing I know not yet,
 That I may see
 The man that shall my husband be,
 Not in his best or worst array,
 But what he weareth every day ;
 That I to-morrow may him ken
 From among all other men.’ ”

In place of the last four lines was sometimes substituted : —

“ How he goes, and what he wears,
 And what he does, all days, and years.”

The figure in the dream would then appear with the badge of his calling, — as a musician, with his lute, or a scholar, with his book.

Another method invoked the aid of the moon, the maiden stealing out in the evening and leaning over a stile to say : —

“ All hail to thee, Moon, all hail to thee !
 I prithee, good moon, reveal to me,
 This night, who my husband shall be.”

But the foregoing was properly practised on the first appearance of the new moon after New Year's Day, and the method by *Cromnymantia*, which Burton describes in his “ *Anatomy of Melancholy* ” as “ a kind of divination with onions laid on the altar,” belonged to Christmas Eve. The surest and best of these spells was peculiar to the 20th of January and was known as “ fasting St. Agnes' Fast.” Marston, one of the Elizabethan dramatists whom Keats knew well, had a Venetian woman exclaim to another : “ We two, that any time these fourteen years have called sisters, brought and bred up together, that have told one another all our dreams, talk'd all night long of young men, and spent many an idle hour ; fasted upon the stones on St. Agnes' night together.” — (*The Insatiate Countess*, Act I., Sc. I.) Another Elizabethan, Ben Jonson, alludes in one of his *Masques* to St. Agnes' dreams : —

“ And on sweet Saint Agnes' night
 Please you with the promis'd sight,
 Some of husbands, some of lovers,
 Which an empty dream discovers.”

Page 63, sts. I.—III. These opening stanzas, with their impressions of wintry cold, dreary old age, of death and burial, serve to brighten by

force of contrast and to make more welcome to the reader the coming glow of youth and love. An objection urged against this poem is that the beadsman has nothing to do with the story. He has much to do, however, with our feeling for the story.

Pages 63-64, sts. III., IV. The stanza which originally followed the third, a stanza which many a poet would be proud to claim, Keats rejected. It runs:—

“ But there are ears may hear sweet melodies.
And there are eyes to brighten festivals,
And there are feet for nimble minstrelsies,
And many a lip that for the red wine calls —
Follow, then follow to the illumined halls,
Follow me youth — and leave the eremite —
Give him a tear — then trophied bannerals
And many a brilliant tasseling of light
Shall droop from arched ways this high baronial night.”

Page 64, st. IV. The epithet “snarling” accords well with “chide” and furthers the impression of alertness given throughout the stanza, — an impression culminating in the eager-eyed stare of those marvellously vivid, mediæval angels,

“ With hair blown back, and wings put cross-wise on their breasts.”

The reader’s mood is effectually diverted from the dim old beadsman to the bursting in of “argent revelry.”

Page 65, st. VI., 6-9. This is precisely the method prescribed by tradition.

Page 65, st. VII., 3. The phrase “her maiden eyes divine” seems to be echoed in Tennyson’s “her melancholy eyes divine.” (“*Mariana in the South*.”) 4. “I do not use *train* for *concourse of passers-by* but for *skirts* sweeping along the floor.” — *Keats to Taylor*, June 11, 1820.

Page 65, st. VIII., 7. The expression “all amort” comes from Shakespeare and Massinger, bringing the Elizabethan fragrance with it.

Page 66, st. XII. In retouching this stanza, Keats substituted “Hildebrand” for “Ferdinand.” “Then there’s that old Lord Maurice,” who was once “old Lord Maurice Lacey” and again,

“old Francesco Mendez, not a wit
Tamer for all his Palsy.”

The manuscript of the poem shows that Keats hesitated long between the names “Porphyro” and “Lionel” for his hero.

Page 67, st. xiii., 7-9. This weaving of St. Agnes' wool is explained by the passages from Naogeorgus and others, given above.

Page 67, st. xiv., 3. "In Reginald Scot's 'Discovery of Witchcraft' (Book XII., Chapter XVI.) a prayer is mentioned 'whereby might be carried in a sieve water or other liquor.' " — FORMAN.

Page 69, st. xix., 6. Keats's poetry has many fairy suggestions. In his "Epistle to George Felton Mathew," we read (lines 20-30):

" I am oft in doubt whether at all
I shall again see Phœbus in the morning:
Or flush'd Aurora in the roseate dawning!
Or a white Naiad in a rippling stream;
Or a rapt seraph in a moonlight beam,
Or again witness what with thee I've seen,
The dew by fairy feet swept from the green,
After a night of some quaint jubilee
Which every elf and fay had come to see!
When bright processions took their airy march
Beneath the curved moon's triumphal arch."

Note, too, the closing lines of the seventh stanza in the "Ode to a Nightingale." The poet's name, John Keats, was run into Junkets by the Leigh Hunt circle "in allusion to his friends of Fairy-land."

Page 69, st. xix., 8-9.

" And ever overhead
Bellow'd the tempest, and the rotten branch
Snapt in the rushing of the river-rain
Above them; and in change of glare and gloom
Her eyes and neck glittering went and came;
Till now the storm, its burst of passion spent,
Moaning and calling out of other lands,
Had left the ravaged woodland yet once more
To peace; and what should not have been had been,
For Merlin, overtalk'd and overworn,
Had yielded, told her all the charm, and slept.
Then, in one moment, she put forth the charm
Of woven paces and of waving hands,
And in the hollow oak he lay as dead,
And lost to life and use and name and fame."

— TENNYSON, "Vivien."

Page 70, st. xxiii. "What thorough sweetness, and perfection of lovely imagery! How one delicacy is heaped upon another! But for

a burst of richness, noiseless, coloured, suddenly enriching the moonlight, as if a door of heaven were opened, read the stanza that follows."

— LEIGH HUNT.

Page 70, st. xxiv. "Our greatest men, whether sad or gay, still delight, like the great men of all ages, in brilliant hues. The coloring of Scott and Byron is full and pure ; that of Keats and Tennyson rich even to excess." — RUSKIN, "Modern Painters."

Page 71, st. xxv. "Observation, I believe, shows that moonlight has not the power to transmit the hues of painted glass as Keats in this celebrated passage represents it. Let us be grateful for the error, if error it is, which has led him to heighten, by these saintly splendors of color, the sentiment of a scene wherein a voluptuous glow is so exquisitely attempered with chivalrous chastity and awe." — SIDNEY COLVIN, "John Keats."

Page 71, st. xxvi. In Leigh Hunt's review of Keats's third volume (*The Indicator*, August 2 and 9, 1820) he wrote of this description : "It falls at once gorgeously and delicately upon us, like the colors of the painted glass. Nor is Madeline hurt by all her encrusting jewelry and rustling silks. Her gentle, unsophisticated heart is in the midst, and turns them into so many ministrants to her loveliness."

Page 71, st. xxvii., 7. Leigh Hunt interprets this line as follows : "Clasp'd like a missal in a land of *Pagans*: that is to say, where Christian prayer-books must not be seen, and are, therefore, doubly cherished for the danger." The correctness of this interpretation is, however, open to question.

Page 72, st. xxviii. The eighth line betrays an inaccuracy in the mediæval setting. The floors of such a baronial castle would have been strewn with rushes. But such minutiae are as nothing before the genius of imagination that created the perfect figure of line seventh. The figures of "The Eve of St. Agnes" reach the height of romantic poetry.

Page 72, st. xxix., 9. "That line," Keats once said to Cowden-Clarke, "came into my head when I remembered how I used to listen in bed to your music at school." Keats's delight in music is manifest throughout his poems and letters.

Page 72, st. xxx., 1. The phrase an "azure-lidded sleep" may be compared with Tennyson's expression "argent-lidded eyes." ("Recollections of the Arabian Nights.") Leigh Hunt noted the thirtieth stanza as one "for which Persian kings would fill a poet's mouth with gold." But gold would be poor eating for the poet who had imagined such a luscious feast as this. The appeal to the palate is frank, and smell

and touch are both excited, but the beauty of the many-colored fruits and jellies,

“And lucent syrups, tinct with cinnamon,”

speaks to the more intellectual sense of sight, while the imagination is summoned all the way to Fez, and

“From silken Samarcand to cedar’d Lebanon.”

But not even the saving grace of the fact that the lovers left the delicacies untasted could avert Mrs. Carlyle’s disdain, on which Elizabeth Barrett, in a letter to Robert Browning a year before their marriage, thus comments :—

“Also Mrs. Carlyle’s letter—thank you for letting me see it. I admire *that* too! It is as ingenious ‘a case’ against poor Keats, as could well be drawn—but nobody who knew very deeply what poetry *is*, *could*, you now, draw any case against him. A poet of the senses, he may be and is, just as she says—but then it is of the senses idealized; and no dream in a ‘store-room’ would ever be like the ‘Eve of St. Agnes,’ unless dreamed by some ‘animosus infans,’ like Keats himself.”

Page 73, st. xxxiii. “La Belle Dame sans Merci” is the title of a poem by Alain Chartier, secretary and court poet of Charles VI. and Charles VII. of France. Keats’s magical lyric under the same title has nothing else in common with the “ancient ditty,” which was, by the way, not Provençal.

Page 75, st. xxxviii. In the manuscript the stanza closes thus :—

“Though I have found but cannot rob thy nest!
Soft Nightingale, I’ll keep thee in a cage
To sing to me—but hark! the blinded tempest’s rage!”

Concerning the poem as a whole, the opinion of William Michael Rossetti, who found its great fault an “extreme tenuity of constructive power,” should be compared with the following passage from Stedman’s “Nature and Elements of Poetry” :—

“In poetry true beauty of detail is next to that of construction, but non-creative writers lavish all their ingenuity upon decoration until it becomes a vice. . . . In fine, construction must be decorated, but decoration is not the main object of a building or a poem. ‘The Eve of St. Agnes’ is perhaps our finest English example of the extreme point to which effects of detail can be carried in a romantic poem. The faultless construction warrants it.”

The judgment of Swinburne is, perhaps, more in point than either. He says of "The Eve of St. Agnes": "With no shadow of pretence to such interest as may be derived from stress of incident or depth of sentiment, it stands out among all other famous poems as a perfect and unsurpassable study in pure color and clear melody."

The perverse criticism that condemns "The Eve of St. Agnes" as wanting philosophic depth may be answered in Keats's own words:—

"And they shall be accounted poet kings
Who simply tell the most heart-easing things."

THE EVE OF ST. MARK.

The first mention of this poem occurs in a letter to George and Georgiana Keats of date February 14, 1818. Keats promises to send them in his next packet "The Pot of Basil, St. Agnes Eve, and if I should have finished it, a little thing called The Eve of St. Mark." In another letter to the same, dated September 20, 1819, Keats says: "Some time since I began a poem called 'The Eve of St. Mark,' quite in the spirit of town quietude. I think I [it?] will give you the sensation of walking about an old country town in a coolish evening. I know not whether I shall ever finish it; I will give it as far as I have gone. Ut tibi placeat . . ." Keats never finished and never published the fragment, which was printed among his "Literary Remains" by Lord Houghton.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti said of "The Eve of St. Mark" that it "is, perhaps, with 'La Belle Dame sans Merci,' the chastest and choicest example of his maturing manner, and shows astonishingly real mediævalism for one not bred an artist." Rossetti furnished Forman with an extract from "The Unseen World" (Masters, 1853) embodying the superstition which, in Rossetti's opinion, the poem, so far as its development could be foreshadowed, was to illustrate. This passage runs: "It was believed that if a person, on St. Mark's Eve, placed himself near the church-porch when twilight was thickening, he would behold the apparition of those persons in the parish who were to be seized with any severe disease that year, go into the church. If they remained there it signified their death; if they came out again it portended their recovery; and the longer or shorter the time they remained in the building, the severer or less dangerous their illness. Infants, under age to walk, *rolled in*."

Brand's "Observations on Popular Antiquities" says: "It was an old custom in Yorkshire for the common people to sit and watch in

the church porch on St. Mark's Eve, from eleven o'clock at night till one in the morning. The third year (for this must be done thrice) they were supposed to see the ghosts of all those who were to die the next year pass by into the church."

Compare Hood's prose tale "St. Mark's Eve."

After the "Letters to Fanny Brawne" were published, Rossetti suggested to Forman that the probable plot of the poem (to the effect that "the heroine—remorseful after trifling with a sick and now absent lover—might make her way to the minster-porch to learn his fate by the spell, and perhaps see his figure enter but not return") connects itself with Keats's own illness and with Fanny Brawne.

It is by no means certain, however, that the development of the story has been rightly guessed. We have a chilly Sabbath evening in a cathedral city, with a demure folk on the way to vespers, and a maiden in a curious chamber, where her shadow sports and glowers, reading by firelight in an old illuminated volume the legend of St. Mark. "The rest is silence."

"April rains." Compare the opening lines of "The Prologue" in Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales."

"Golden broideries." Compare the description of an illuminated manuscript in Aldrich's "Friar Jerome's Beautiful Book."

"The winged Lion of St. Mark." See Ruskin's graphic description of St. Mark's ("The Stones of Venice," vol. 2, ch. 4), especially for its picture (§ X.) of an English "Minster-square."

"Bertha." This name occurs, in connection with Canterbury, in Keats's unfortunate poem "The Cap and Bells," especially in stanzas 43 and 56.

"You seem to know" — "I do know," answer'd Hum,
 "Your majesty's in love with some fine girl
 Named Bertha; but her surname will not come,
 Without a little conjuring." "'Tis Pearl,
 'Tis Bertha Pearl! What makes my brains so whirl?
 And she is softer, fairer than her name!"
 "Where does she live?" ask'd Hum. "Her fair locks curl
 So brightly, they put all our fays to shame! —
 Live? — O! at Canterbury, with her old grand-dame."

* * * * *

"April the twenty-fourth, — this coming day,
 Now breathing its new bloom upon the skies,
 Will end in St. Mark's Eve; — you must away,
 For on that eve alone can you the maid convey."

“Avadavat.” The red waxbill, a small Indian songbird.

“Als writith.” The following seems to be an imitation, not over accurate in detail, of Chaucerian English.

ODE ON A GRECIAN URN.

This poem was first published, signed with a dagger (†), in Number XV. of *Annals of the Fine Arts*, apparently issued in January, 1820. But the ode was composed, according to Lord Houghton, in the spring of 1819 and soon after “repeated, or rather chanted” by the poet to Haydon, — who had compelled Keats’s attention to the Elgin marbles, — “in the sort of recitative that so well suited his deep grave voice, as they strolled together through Kilburn meadows.” Keats may have seen, in Holland House gardens, a marble urn wrought with a scene of pastoral sacrifice.

The variation of the rhyme-scheme in the closing sestets of the five stanzas should be noticed.

Mr. Palgrave, in his “Golden Treasury,” comments on this poem as follows: “Every one knows the general story of the Italian Renaissance, of the Revival of Letters. — From Petrarch’s day to our own, that ancient world has renewed its youth. Poets and artists, students and thinkers, have yielded themselves wholly to its fascination, and deeply penetrated its spirit. Yet perhaps no one more truly has vivified, whilst idealizing, the picture of Greek country life in the fancied Golden Age, than Keats in these lovely (if somewhat unequally executed) stanzas: — his quick imagination, by a kind of ‘natural magic,’ more than supplying the scholarship which his youth had no opportunity of gaining.”

ODE TO PSYCHE.

Keats sent this ode to George and Georgiana in a letter written in April, 1819, saying of his work: “The following poem — the last I have written — is the first and the only one with which I have taken even moderate pains. I have, for the most part, dash’d off my lines in a hurry. This I have done leisurely — I think it reads the more richly for it, and will, I hope, encourage me to write other things in even a more peaceable and healthy spirit. You must recollect that Psyche was not embodied as a goddess before the time of Apuleius the Platonist, who lived after the Augustan age, and consequently the Goddess was never worshipped or sacrificed to with any of the ancient fervour — and perhaps never thought of in the old religion — I am more orthodox than to let a heathen Goddess be so neglected.”

William Morris has followed Keats in honoring Psyche in poetry. ("The Earthly Paradise," Part II., May.)

The rhyme-scheme of the ode has an allowable freedom. The first stanza apparently leaves two unrhymed lines, but one of these is rhymed in the second. The second stanza has an unrhymed line. The fourth stanza repeats, without rhyming, two verses from the third.

Page 83, st. i., 1-2. "numbers, wrung
By sweet enforcement and remembrance dear."

This carries a reminiscence of Milton's "Lycidas":—

"Bitter constraint and sad occasion dear
Compel me."

Page 83, st. ii., 2. "Tyrian."

"Who has not heard how Tyrian shells
Enclosed the blue, that dye of dyes
Whereof one drop worked miracles?"
—BROWNING, "Popularity."

Page 84, st. v. On this stanza Ruskin wrote ("Modern Painters," VI., 9): "Keats (as is his way) puts nearly all that may be said of the pine into one verse, though they are only figurative pines of which he is speaking. I have come to that pass of admiration for him now, that I dare not read him, so discontented he makes me with my own work: but others must not leave unread, in considering the influence of trees upon the human soul, that marvellous 'Ode to Psyche.'" Ruskin italicizes the phrase "Fledge the wild-ridged mountains."

ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE.

This poem, first printed July, 1819, in *Annals of the Fine Arts*, and signed with a dagger (†), was written by Keats the spring after his brother's death. It is remembered that a nightingale, in that May of 1819, had built its nest close to Wentworth Place (in Hampstead), where Keats was then making his home with Brown. "Keats," wrote Lord Houghton, "took great pleasure in her song, and one morning took his chair from the breakfast table to the grass plot under a plum tree, where he remained between two and three hours. He then reached the house with some scraps of paper in his hand, which he soon put together in the form of this Ode." Haydon wrote to Miss Mitford of Keats: "The death of his brother wounded him deeply, and it appeared to me from that hour he began to droop. He wrote his

exquisite 'Ode to the Nightingale' at this time, and as we were one evening walking in the Kilburn meadows he repeated it to me, before he put it to paper, in a low, tremulous undertone which affected me extremely."

Page 85, st. i. "My heart aches." "There is an awful warmth about my heart like a load of Immortality." — Letter to Reynolds, September, 1818.

Page 86, st. iii. "Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies." Keats was inevitably thinking of "poor 'Tom,'" but the reader thinks of Keats.

Page 86, st. iv. "The Queen-Moon."

"What, there's nothing in the moon noteworthy?

Nay: for if that moon could love a mortal,

Use, to charm him (so to fit a fancy),

All her magic ('tis the old sweet mythos),

She would turn a new side to her mortal,

Side unseen of herdsman, huntsman, steersman—

Blank to Zoroaster on his terrace,

Blind to Galileo on his turret,

Dumb to Homer, dumb to Keats—him even!

—BROWNING, "One Word More."

Page 87, st. vii. The supreme stanza of an incomparable ode.

ODE ON MELANCHOLY.

Printed in the volume of 1820. Lord Houghton says: "A singular instance of Keats's delicate perception occurred in the composition of this Ode. In the original manuscript he had intended to represent the vulgar conception of Melancholy with gloom and horror, in contrast with the emotion that incites to —

'glut thy sorrow on a morning rose,

Or on the rainbow of the salt sand-wave,

Or on the wealth of globed peonies,'

and which essentially

'lives in Beauty — Beauty that must die,

And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips

Bidding adieu.'

The first stanza, therefore, was the following: as grim a passage as Blake or Fuseli could have dreamed and painted: —

' Though you should build a bark of dead men's bones,
 And rear a platform gibbet for a mast,
 Stitch shrouds together for a sail, with groans
 To fill it out, blood-stained and aghast ;
 Although your rudder be a dragon's tail
 Long sever'd, yet still hard with agony,
 Your cordage large uprootings from the skull
 Of bald Medusa, certes you would fail
 To find the Melancholy — whether she
 Dreameth in any isle of Lethe dull.'

But no sooner was this written, than the poet became conscious that the coarseness of the contrast would destroy the general effect of luxurious tenderness which it was the object of the poem to produce, and he confined the gross notion of Melancholy to less violent images, and let the ode at once begin,

' No, no, go not to Lethe,' &c."

With this ode should be compared John Fletcher's "Melancholy," easily accessible in Palgrave's "Golden Treasury."

ODE ON INDOLENCE.

First published in the "Literary Remains." It shows the want of revision in the faulty rhyme of the last stanza. The sestet is regular in rhyme-scheme through the first four stanzas, but varies in the fifth and sixth.

Sidney Colvin says of this poem ("Keats," pp. 172-3) "This ode, less highly wrought and more unequal than the rest, contains the imaginative record of a passing mood (mentioned also in his correspondence) when the wonted intensity of his emotional life was suspended under the spell of an agreeable physical languor. Well had it been for him had such moods come more frequently to give him rest. Most sensitive among the sons of men, the sources of joy and pain lay close together in his nature, and unsatisfied passion kept both sources filled to bursting."

The mention in Keats's correspondence referred to above was first pointed out by Rossetti. In a journal letter, of date February, 1819, to George and "little George," Keats wrote: "This morning I am in a sort of temper, indolent and supremely careless ; I long after a stanza or two of Thomson's 'Castle of Indolence' ; . . . neither Poetry, nor Ambition, nor Love have any alertness of countenance ; as they pass

by me, they seem rather like three figures on a Greek vase, two men and a woman, whom no one but myself could distinguish in their disguisement." In the ode, however, two of the shadows, if not all three, are maidens.

TO AUTUMN.

This ode, which appeared in the 1820 volume, may have been written at Winchester, for under date of September 22, 1819, Keats wrote to Reynolds: "How beautiful the season is now — how fine the air — a temperate sharpness about it. Really, without joking, chaste weather, Dian skies. I never liked stubble-fields so much as now — aye, better than the chilly green of the Spring. Somehow, a stubble plain looks warm, in the same way that some pictures look warm. This struck me so much in my Sunday's walk that I composed upon it."

The first stanza is slightly marred by one imperfect rhyme, and the rhyme-scheme of its septet is perhaps a little less effective than that of the two following stanzas. With these it would be hard indeed to find a breath of fault.

ODE: BARDS OF PASSION AND OF MIRTH.

This poem, included in the 1820 volume, was written on a blank leaf in Keats's copy of "Beaumont and Fletcher." Of these, the first was preëminently the bard of passion; the second of mirth. Compare the song "Spirit here that reignest!" written by Keats on another blank leaf of this same volume. Keats sent this ode to his brother and sister in America under date of January 2, 1819, with the brief comment "It is on the double immortality of Poets." It is, then, open to question whether, as several editors claim, the ode is to be understood as addressed to Beaumont and Fletcher in particular.

Here, again, the swift lyric flow has not waited for perfect rhymes.

LINES ON THE MERMAID TAVERN.

This poem, included in the 1820 volume, was sent to Reynolds as early as February 3, 1818. In connection with this may well be read the poetic epistle entitled in the folio: "Master Francis Beaumont's Letter to Ben Jonson, written, before he and Master Fletcher came to London, with two of the precedent comedies, then not finished, which deferred their Merry Meetings at the Mermaid."

The manuscript copy of the ode ends with the quatrain: —

“Souls of Poets dead and gone,
Are the winds a sweeter home,
Richer is uncellar'd cavern
Than the merry Mermaid Tavern?”

In rejecting this conclusion for a repetition of the opening lines, Keats may have been influenced by considerations of rhyme. Even as this delightful lyric stands, we have to remind ourselves that those were no common pies which the poet rhymes with Paradise.

FRAGMENT OF AN ODE TO MAIA.

Of these lines Keats said to Reynolds, enclosing them in a letter dated May 3, 1818, “I wrote them on Mayday — and intend to finish the ode all in good time.”

MEG MERRILIES.

This poem first appeared in *Hood's Magazine*, 1844, under title of “Old Meg.” It was printed without a title in the “Literary Remains.” The present title was given it by Forman. From his walking trip in Scotland Keats sent this ballad back to his fifteen-year-old sister Fanny, in a letter dated July 2, 1818. “We are in the midst of Meg Merrilies’ country, of whom I suppose you have heard,” he wrote, and added gayly that, if Fanny liked this sort of ballads, he would “now and then scribble one” for her.

Lord Houghton says of this part of the Scottish trip: “The pedestrians passed by Solway Firth through that delightful part of Kirkcudbrightshire, the scene of ‘Guy Mannering.’ Keats had never read the novel, but was much struck with the character of Meg Merrilies as delineated to him by Brown. He seemed at once to realize the creation of the novelist, and, suddenly stopping in the pathway, at a point where a profusion of honeysuckles, wild rose, and foxglove mingled with the bramble and broom that filled up the spaces between the shattered rocks, he cried out, ‘Without a shadow of doubt on that spot has old Meg Merrilies often boiled her kettle.’”

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI.

This “wondrous” poem, as Rossetti characterized it, was sent by Keats to George and Georgiana under date of April 28, 1819. It was published by Leigh Hunt in *The Indicator* of May 10, 1820, over the signature “Caviare.” The text, as given by Lord Houghton in the “Literary Remains,” presents some variations from *The Indicator* text.

Page 96, sts. I.-II. *The Indicator* version opens each stanza with the line:—

“Ah, what can ail thee, wretched wight”

Page 97, sts. v.-vi. In Lord Houghton's version the fifth and sixth stanzas are transposed.

Page 97, st. viii. *The Indicator* version gives this stanza as follows:

“She took me to her elfin grot,
And there she gaz'd and sighed deep,
And there I shut her wild sad eyes—
So kiss'd to sleep.”

This may be a revision, for the other wording, though certainly more in accord with the poem as a whole, challenges a criticism against which Keats was already on the defensive in writing to his brother and sister “Why four kisses—you will say—why four, because I wish to restrain the headlong impetuosity of my Muse—she would have fain said ‘score’ without hurting the rhyme—but we must temper the Imagination, as the Critics say, with Judgment. I was obliged to choose an even number that both eyes might have fair play, and to speak truly I think two apiece quite sufficient. Suppose I had said seven there would have been three and a half apiece—a very awkward affair, and well got out of on my side.”

Page 98, st. x. Lord Houghton's version has “They” for “Who” at the opening of the third line.

Page 98, st. xi. For “gloom,” *The Indicator* reads “gloom.”

See also note on stanza xxxiii. of “The Eve of St. Agnes,” p. 139.

ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER.

This sonnet, written in 1815, was the jewel of the first volume. Cowden Clarke has told how Keats and he read the old Elizabethan folio together all one summer night, parting at dawn, and how by ten o'clock that morning he had received from Keats this impetuous sonnet.

It does not mar the splendor of the poem that it was, in fact, Balboa and not Cortez who so beheld the Pacific from “a peak in Darien.”

Under date of April 27, 1818, Keats said in a letter to Reynolds, “I long to feed upon old Homer as we have upon Shakespeare, and as I have lately upon Milton.”

TO HOMER.

This sonnet, first printed in the “Literary Remains,” is supposed to have been written in 1818. Rossetti, however, would place it, on

internal evidence, earlier than the Chapman sonnet, although Rossetti declared the line

“There is a budding morrow in midnight”

one of the finest “in all poetry.”

TO ONE WHO HAS BEEN LONG IN CITY PENT.

This sonnet, published in the 1817 volume, was also preserved in copies by both the brothers. These present some slight variations from the printed form. The transcript by George Keats has the note “Written in the Fields—June 1816.” The Miltonic echo in Keats’s mind is shown by the resemblance of this first line to “Paradise Lost,” IX., 445,

“As one who, long in populous city pent.”

THE HUMAN SEASONS.

This sonnet and the following, “To Ailsa Rock,” were first printed in Leigh Hunt’s *Literary Pocket-Book*, 1819, with the signature “I.” *Blackwood’s* sneered at them as “two feats of Johnny Keats.” This sonnet was written by Keats. March, 1818, in what he was pleased to call the “splashy, rainy, misty, snowy, foggy, haily, floody, muddy, slipshod county” of Devonshire.

TO AILSA ROCK.

This sonnet was written on the Scottish walking-trip, about July 10, 1810. On that date Keats wrote to his invalid brother Tom: “I shall endeavor that you may follow our steps in this walk. . . . At the end we had a gradual ascent and got among the tops of the Mountains whence in a little time I descried in the Sea Ailsa Rock 940 feet high—it was 15 miles distant and seemed close upon us. The effect of Ailsa with the peculiar perspective of the Sea in connection with the ground we stood on, and the misty rain then falling, gave me a complete Idea of a deluge. Ailsa struck me very suddenly—really I was a little alarmed.”

Keats had his first view of Ailsa Rock in gray weather. In the sunshine this “craggy ocean pyramid” is beautifully banded, and the play of the myriad sea-birds about it is so blithe and free that the beholder might almost believe, with the Arran peasants, that these are transformed fairies who, fleeing from Christianity and the English tongue, find their only resting-place on this sea-girt crag.

WHEN I HAVE FEARS.

This sonnet, although the manuscript copy is dated 1817, was first printed in the "Literary Remains." It was sent to Reynolds by the poet in a letter of January 31, 1818, as his "last sonnet." Keats must have known its excellence, but may have withheld it from print because it was too intimate a self-revelation.

WHY DID I LAUGH TO-NIGHT?

This sonnet was first published in the "Literary Remains." It was sent, in one of those inestimably precious journal letters, to George and Georgiana, under date of March 19, 1818. "This is the world—thus we cannot expect to give way many hours to pleasure. Circumstances are like Clouds continually gathering and bursting.—While we are laughing, the seed of some trouble is put into the wide arable land of events—while we are laughing it sprouts, it grows, and suddenly bears a poison fruit which we must pluck. Even so we have leisure to reason on the misfortunes of our friends; our own touch us too nearly for words. . . . I have no doubt that thousands of people never heard of have had hearts completely disinterested; I can remember but two—Socrates and Jesus.—Their histories evince it. . . . It is to be lamented that the history of the latter was written and revised by Men interested in the pious frauds of Religion. Yet through all this I see his splendour. Even here, though I myself am pursuing the same instinctive course as the veriest human animal you can think of, I am, however young, writing at random, straining at particles of light in the midst of a great darkness, without knowing the bearing of any one assertion, of any one opinion. Yet may I not in this be free from sin? May there not be superior beings amused with any graceful, though instinctive, attitude my mind may fall into as I am entertained with the alertness of a Stoat or the anxiety of a Deer? . . . I am ever afraid that your anxiety for me will lead you to fear for the violence of my temperament continually smothered down: for that reason I did not intend to have sent you the following sonnet—but look over the last two pages and ask yourselves whether I have not that in me which will bear the buffets of the world. It will be the best comment on my sonnet; it will show you that it was written with no Agony but that of ignorance; with no thirst of anything but Knowledge when pushed to the point though the first steps to it were through my human passions—they went away

and I wrote with my Mind — and perhaps I must confess a little bit of my heart — I went to bed and enjoyed an uninterrupted sleep. Sane I went to bed and sane I arose.”

A DREAM, AFTER READING DANTE'S EPISODE OF PAULO AND FRANCESCA.

“This beautiful Sonnet,” says Forman, “seems to have been written originally in the first volume of the miniature Cary’s Dante which Keats carried through Scotland in his knapsack ; and the composition should probably be assigned to the early part of April, 1819. . . . The sonnet was published over the signature ‘Caviare’ in *The Indicator* for the 28th of June, 1820. . . . It is worth while to record that Dante Gabriel Rossetti, writing to me concerning the false rhyme *slept* and *bereft*, characterized this as ‘by far the finest of Keats’s sonnets (mostly very faulty or inferior) besides that on Chapman’s Homer.’ . . . Rossetti qualified his estimate of the sonnets in a later letter by informing me that on further examination he found there were fourteen ‘more or less worthy of him.’ ”

Keats commemorated in this sonnet a veritable dream, which he described to his brother and sister in America under date of April 18 or 19, 1819 : “The fifth canto of Dante pleases me more and more — it is that one in which he meets with Paulo and Francesca. I had passed many days in rather a low state of mind, and in the midst of them I dreamt of being in that region of Hell. The dream was one of the most delightful enjoyments I ever had in my life. I floated about the whirling atmosphere as it is described, with a beautiful figure, to whose lips mine were joined as it seemed for an age — and in the midst of all this cold and darkness I was warm — even flowery tree-tops sprung up, and we rested on them, sometimes with the lightness of a cloud, till the wind blew us away again. I tried a sonnet upon it — there are fourteen lines, but nothing of what I felt in it — O that I could dream it every night”

ON THE SEA.

This sonnet, which Lord Houghton published in the “Literary Remains,” had been already printed in *The Champion*, August 17, 1817. It was apparently written on the Isle of Wight, during that restless month after the appearance of Keats’s first volume of poems. He sent it to Reynolds in a letter dated April 17, 1827, saying : “The

wind is in a sulky fit, and I feel that it would be no bad thing to be the favorite of that Fairy, who would give one the power of seeing how our Friends got on at a Distance. I should like, of all Loves, a sketch of you and Tom and George in ink which Haydon will do if you tell him how I want them. From want of regular rest I have been rather *nervous*—and the passage in ‘Lear’—‘Do you not hear the sea?’—has haunted me intensely.”

“Hecate.” The goddess known as Diana on earth, Phœbe in heaven. Hecate in hell. Here, however, the reference is to the goddess as Phœbe, the Moon, withdrawing the tide.

BRIGHT STAR.

This is believed to be Keats’s latest poem. Lord Houghton, who published it in the “Literary Remains,” records that, after Keats had embarked—September 18, 1820—for Italy, he “landed once more in England, on the Dorsetshire coast, after a weary fortnight spent in beating about the Channel; the bright beauty of the day and the scene revived the poet’s drooping heart, and the inspiration remained on him for some time even after his return to the ship. It was then that he composed that sonnet of solemn tenderness.”

Keats wrote out the sonnet on the blank leaf of a precious copy of Shakespeare, filled with his marks and notes—a book which had been given him by Reynolds, and which he had just given to Severn. The sonnet stands, probably by the poet’s design, opposite the title “A Lover’s Complaint.”

SHED NO TEAR!

This song was first printed, without date, in the “Literary Remains.” It has been entitled a “Faery Song,” but it falls, from the “flush pomegranate bough,” like a silvery voice from the freed spirit of the young, beauty-enraptured poet.

HYPERION.

The allusions in Keats’s letters to “Hyperion” begin December 25, 1818, the month in whose opening week “poor Tom” had died. “I think you knew before you left England,” Keats wrote to George and Georgiana, “that my next subject would be ‘the fall of Hyperion.’ I went on a little with it last night, but it will take some time to get into the vein again.” This certainly suggests, what Colvin believes to be the case, that Keats had begun this poem before his brother’s

death. On December 29, continuing this journal letter, he said: "Just now I took out my poem to go on with it, but the thought of my writing so little to you came upon me and I could not get on." On January 2, 1819, he wrote them to the same effect: "I have no thought pervading me so constantly and frequently as that of you — my Poem cannot frequently drive it away — you will retard it much more than you could by taking up my time if you were in England." April 15, though during the interval he had sent his brother and sister some of his most beautiful shorter poems, he said, "I am still at a stand in versifying — I cannot do it yet with any pleasure." But writing to Bailey from Winchester, August 15, 1819, he had a rich report to give: "Within these two months I have written 1500 lines. . . . I have written 2 tales, one from Boccaccio, called the 'Pot of Basil,' and another called 'St. Agnes's Eve,' on a popular Superstition, and a 3rd called 'Lamia' (half finished). I have also been writing parts of my 'Hyperion' and completed 4 Acts of a tragedy." To his friendly publisher, Taylor, Keats wrote September 5, "I have finished 'Lamia,' and am now occupied in revising 'St. Agnes's Eve,' and studying Italian." On September 22, Keats wrote to Reynolds, "I have given up 'Hyperion,' — there were too many Miltonic inversions in it." In speaking of Keats's occupations in November and December of that year, Brown said, "In the evenings, at his own desire, he occupied a separate apartment, and was deeply engaged in remodelling the fragment of 'Hyperion' into the form of a Vision." The text of this "Vision" is extant, but sadly lacks, as a whole, what Landor calls Keats's "effluence of power and light." The earlier "Hyperion," unfinished, was published in the 1820 volume. In the advertisement the publishers stated that this fragment was "printed at their particular request, and contrary to the wish of the author." It was "Hyperion," however, which conquered Byron's reluctant homage, and confirmed Shelley's generous faith.

"His ancient mother." Saturn was the son of Coelus and Tellus, of Heaven and Earth.

"Conscious of." In the revision, *captious at*.

"And then spake." In the revision, the speaking of Saturn is described in a fine passage culminating in a supremely imaginative line:

"As the moist scent of flowers, and grass, and leaves,
Fills forest-dells with a pervading air,
Known to the woodland nostril, so the words
Of Saturn fill'd the mossy glooms around,

Even to the hollows of time-eaten oaks,
And to the windings of the foxes' hole,
With sad, low tones, while thus he spoke, and sent
Strange moanings to the solitary Pan."

"O tender spouse of gold Hyperion,
Thea."

"We all recognize the importance, not only in the Greek mind, but in every subsequent conception, of the three great Titan Goddesses, Rhea, Themis, and Mnemosune. In a less degree we also acknowledge the powers of Phœbe and of Tethys. But the sixth of the Titan sisters, and the one who is first named by Hesiod, we usually forget, — Theia, the most ancient goddess of Light.

"Now the marriage of Theia and Hyperion, and the birth of their children, the Sun, the Moon, and the Dawn, — Helios, Selene, and Eos, — is a myth of even higher rank and import than that of the marriage of Cronos and Rhea, of Oceanus and Tethys, and of Cœus and Phœbe; for Theia is in a certain sense the greatest of all the Titans — she is the origin of light and harmony: the embodied 'Let there be light' of the heathen world; and while the powers of the other Titans, and of their descendants, relate chiefly to the law and course of fate in this world, and Themis and Mnemosune have power only over things that are passing or passed, Theia rules the great and eternal heavens, and the course of the sun and moon, and the seven stars." — RUSKIN, *The Tortoise of Ægina*.

"The rebel three." Zeus, who had driven Saturn from the heavens; Neptune, who had usurped the sea; and Pluto, lord of Hades.

"Mammoth-brood." In the revision, *eagle-brood*.

"On he flared." The revision ends here.

"Cybele." Wife of Saturn and goddess of the elemental earth. See *Introduction*, p. 42.

"Stubborn'd." As much stronger than *hardened* as mind is stronger than matter.

"Cœus, and Gyges, and Briareüs,
Typhon, and Dolor, and Porphyryon."

Cœus was one of the six sons of Uranus and brother to Saturn, Oceanus, and Hyperion. Gyges and Briareüs were two of the terrible brood of the Hundred-Handed, symbolizing the wild forces of the storm-wind, or the raging sea. Typhon and Porphyryon, fire-breathing monsters, seem to personify volcanic action.

“Mnemosyne.” Memory.

“Creüs, Iapetus.” Also sons of Uranus.

“Cottus.” Third and last of the Hundred-Handed.

“Even as Hope upon her anchor leans.” The one slip in the marvelously sustained power of these first two books. Their sublime beauty needs no comment. The fragment of the third book is not so unimpeachable in majesty, and yet it is only less than the greatest.

“Enceladus.” A giant unsubdued until Mount Ætna was heaped upon him, beneath whose pile he pants and struggles yet—the personification of earthquake.

“Atlas.” Son of Iapetus and brother of Prometheus.

“Tethys.” Of the “grave, majestic pace,” the ancient sea-queen, wife to Oceanus.

“Clymene.” One of the Oceanides and wife to Iapetus.

“Themis.” Justice.

“Ops.” Another name for Cybele, the queen of Saturn and the “Mother of the Gods.”

Text=Books for Commercial Education

Introduction to the Study of Commerce. By FREDERICK R. CLOW, Ph.D., State Normal School, Oshkosh, Wisconsin. With an introduction by F. W. TAUSSIG, Ph.D., LL.B., Professor of Political Economy, Harvard University. Illustrated by 10 charts and diagrams showing demand and supply, exports and imports, market prices, etc. Cloth, 250 pp. \$1.25.

This book is designed as a working manual of economics and industrial geography for students who are soon to pass from school into practical life. The governing purpose running through the work is not so much to prepare the student for practical business as to enable him to comprehend the principles which lie at the bottom of all business, and to give him that larger intelligence by which he may see the social significance of any detail, as well as its relation to his own pocket.

Business Law. By THOMAS RAEBURN WHITE, B.L., LL.B., Lecturer on Law in the University of Pennsylvania. With an introduction by ROLAND P. FALKNER, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Statistics, University of Pennsylvania. Cloth, 367 pp. \$1.25.

The elementary principles of law involved in the more common business transactions clearly stated, and free from technicality.

"An admirable little work, well suited for both high school and college classes. Sufficiently comprehensive, and the subjects treated are explained concisely and clearly. A careful study of such a work would give to a student much valuable discipline, and a great deal of useful knowledge."—J. E. LE ROSSIGNOL, Department of History and Economics, University of Denver, University Park, Colo.

Baldwin's Industrial History of the United States. By F. SPENCER BALDWIN, Ph.D., R.P.D., Professor of Political Economy and Social Science, Boston University, Boston, Mass. *In preparation.*

Outlines of the Industrial History of the United States.

Introduction to the Study of Economics. By CHARLES JESSE BULLOCK, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Economics, Williams College. New edition, revised and enlarged. 581 pp. \$1.28.

A broad discussion of the principles of economics; special reference to economic and monetary history of the United States.

"The best elementary up-to-date manual I know of."—W. M. DANIELS, A.M., Department of Economics, Princeton University.

Institutes of Economics. By E. BENJAMIN ANDREWS, D.D., LL.D., Chancellor of the University of Nebraska, late President of Brown University. New and revised edition. 240 pp. \$1.10.

Brevity, thoroughness, keen analysis, and encouragement to side-reading, characterize this scholarly work.

"The work is one of remarkable merit."—Dr. GEORGE P. FISHER, in *The Yale Review*.

Correspondence about any of our Books cordially invited

SILVER, BURDETT & COMPANY

NEW YORK

BOSTON

CHICAGO

DATE DUE

JUN 27 1999

12-19-3⁵⁸

#47-0108 Peel Off Pressure Sensitive.

811
K22xb
Keat

PR 4834 .E8 1902
Keats, John, 1795-1821.
Keats's The eve of St. Agne
and other poems

Eve of St. Agnes, and other

811
K22xb
Oregon Library Commission
MODEL SCHOOL LIBRARY

RULES FOR BORROWERS

No Charge for Books.—The books circulated by the Commission are free to all citizens of Oregon who will agree to observe the rules of the library and pay transportation charges both ways on books loaned. Shipment is made by mail or express and all prepaid charges must be remitted upon receipt or return of package. Acknowledgment of receipt is required.

Borrowers.—Adults not previously registered as borrowers should apply through librarian of local public or traveling library, school officers or principal, county school superintendent, member of the legislature, officers of local grange or other permanent organization, or give reference to some state officer or employe located in Salem. Minors must obtain signature of local librarian or school principal.

Number of Volumes.—Any reasonable request for books will be granted if applicant wishes books for study or research work, and books are not needed elsewhere. Loans of fiction will be limited to two volumes.

Time Kept.—Books must be received at the library within twenty-one days from date of loan and may be renewed for two weeks upon request as long as needed for study, unless reserved for other borrowers. Date upon which books will be due in the library is given on notice of shipment which is sent for all loans. Certain books, generally in demand, will be issued for shorter period and may not be renewed. Requests for longer time will be granted, if possible, when loan is made.

Fines.—A fine of five cents a day must be paid for books kept, without renewal, beyond period for which loan is made. No book will be loaned to anyone who has failed to meet the obligations of borrowers as given in these rules. Notice will be sent when books are five days overdue without having been renewed.

Lost and Injured Books.—Borrowers are held responsible for books and are required to pay for lost and injured volumes. Number of pieces loaned is given on notification postal and borrowers are held responsible for this number unless notice of shortage or error is sent immediately upon receipts of package.

Books must be kept clean, must not be marked and corners of leaves must not be turned down.

